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MESOPOTAMIA

AND

ASSYRIA,

FROM THE

EARLIEST AGES TO THE PRESENT TIME;

WITH

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THEIR NATURAL HISTORY.

BY J. BAILLIE FRASER, ESQ.,
Author of "An Historical and Descriptive Account of Persia," &c.

WITH A MAP AND ENGRAVINGS.

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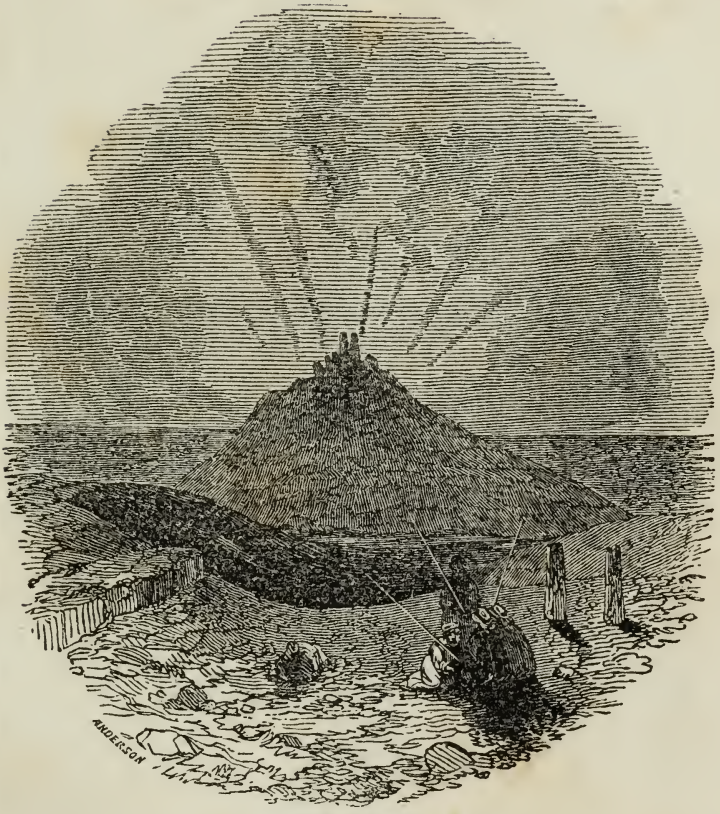
MESOPOTAMIA

AND

ASSYRIA.



The Birs Nimrod.

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MESOPOTAMIA
AND
ASSYRIA.
English Miles
GEORGIA
ARMENIA
AZERBIJAN
KURDISTAN
ARABIA
Syrian Desert
Persian Gulf
Lour Mountains
Longitude East from Greenwich

MESOPOTAM
AND
ASSYRIA

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PREFACE.

In the work now presented to the public, the author has endeavoured to bring under one view all that is known of the history and aspect, moral, physical, and political, of the provinces of Mesopotamia and Assyria; and to give, at the same time, a sketch of the causes that have produced the revolutions of which they have been the theatre. The subject is extensive and complicated, and the difficulty of compressing the matter which it embraces into one volume was proportionally great. That all which might have been done towards the attainment of this object has really been effected, is more than the author ventures to assert; but he can safely affirm that no pains have been spared in collecting the most suitable materials to be found in the writings of others, as well as in applying such as have been furnished by his own acquaintance with those interesting countries.

In point of fact, little original matter can be expected, unless we were to recover some of the lost works of the ancients, or to succeed in deciphering those inscriptions in the cuneiform character which have hitherto baffled the researches of the learned. Late discoveries, indeed, seemed to afford some reasonable hope of success; but it must now be admitted that, though several ingenious conjectures have been made, and some plausible speculations have been hazarded, no accession has been obtained to our knowledge of facts. The subject in general, therefore, remains as dark and uncertain as before.

Nearly all that can be said or known respecting the history, chronology, religion, and manners of these primeval empires, will be found collected in the "Universal Ancient History," a work of very

great learning and research; but those who desire to apply to the original sources of information may, in addition to the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, consult the works of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Arrian, Xenophon, Plutarch, and such others as are usually cited by writers on this subject. Cory's "Ancient Fragments" will supply the English reader with what remains of the works of Berosus, Abydenus, Apollodorus, and Alexander Polyhistor. Hyde, Bryant, Jackson, Hales, Usher, and Newton, may be referred to for chronology. Sir William Drummond, Faber, Bochart, and Beke, will afford food enough for those who delight in ingenious speculations; while Prideaux and Russell will show what can be done to connect profane with sacred history.

For light to guide him in geographical description, the inquirer must have recourse to the works of Ptolemy, of Strabo, and of Cellarius, together with the minor geographies of Hudson and Isidore of Charax; to Abulfeda and Ibn Haukul among the Mohammedans; while, for comparative geography, his main help will be found in D'Anville, Rennell, and Vincent. Williams, in his Geographical Memoir, has presented some learned disquisitions; and the researches of Rich, himself a man of classical learning as well as a judicious observer, are of the highest value. The works of Heeren treat of every branch of the ancient history of these regions; and, though we may not agree in all his conclusions, they are entitled to respect as the opinions of a laborious and acute inquirer into Oriental antiquities.

Our information regarding what may be termed the middle ages of those countries—that is, from the destruction of Babylon by Darius down to the Mohammedan era—is greatly more extensive and complete than that which we possess respecting their remoter history. Those who are anxious for a more intimate acquaintance with the events of this period,

will find ample materials in the pages of the Universal History, and in the more eloquent chapters of Gibbon.

In all that relates to the history and condition of the Christian population in those provinces, and of the various sects that have successively sprung up or still continue to exist, the best authority is Assemani, whose Oriental Dictionary is a mine of invaluable information on such subjects. Mosheim and other Church historians may likewise be consulted, as also Bingham, the author of "Origines Ecclesiasticæ," though these all draw chiefly from Assemani.

Of the condition of modern Mesopotamia—that is, from the Mohammedan conquest to the present time—notices are to be found in the works of various travellers, from Rawolf and Benjamin of Tudela downward. But less is known of Assyria, which now constitutes a portion of the Turkish empire; and there is no general account of the present state of the two provinces, although much valuable information may be gathered from the works of Niebuhr, Olivier, Rich, Buckingham, Porter, and Rousseau. These materials, together with what the author has been enabled to glean from other sources, as well as from his own observations, form the basis of this portion of the present work; and he must here take occasion to express his obligations to Colonel Taylor, Political Resident at Bagdad, to whom he has been indebted, not only for the valuable manuscript journal of the late Mr. Elliot, but for much important information on matters connected with the statistics of the country, as well as with the manners of the people.

Much still remains to be done in both provinces, for there are many districts of which, as yet, little or nothing is known. The labours of modern travellers are, however, daily throwing light on their antiquities, natural history, and geography: and when the works of Colonel Chesney, Major Rawlinson,

and others, shall have been given to the public, and Mr. Ainsworth and his colleagues shall have completed the expedition they have undertaken under the auspices of the Royal Geographical Society, the secrets of some of the most interesting districts in Upper Mesopotamia and Kurdistan, especially those of Sinjar, Hatteras, and Mount Jewar, will, it is expected, be laid fully open to the European world. In the mean time, as every source of information, both private and public, has been made use of in combination with the author's personal knowledge of the country, it is hoped that the geographical account which has been given will be found at once entirely accurate, and as particular, too, as the limits of such a work will permit. In this description may be included the characteristic details of manners and customs of the Arab and Kurdish tribes, which, derived chiefly from actual observation, have been confirmed by various persons, whose opinions, from their opportunities of judging, are entitled to the highest credit.

The sketch of the natural history of these provinces has likewise been drawn up with an anxious desire to afford a summary of whatever valuable information has been collected upon the subject.

Of the decorations of this volume, the author has only to observe, that they are all engraved from drawings made by himself upon the spot, and that he can vouch at least for their accuracy, nothing having been added to the original sketch except the particular effect which was deemed appropriate to the subject.

The utmost care has been bestowed on the construction of the map, which will be found to contain all the additions made by recent travellers to our geographical knowledge of the interesting country which occupies the basin of the Tigris and Euphrates.

May, 1841.

MESOPOTAMIA AND ASSYRIA,

ANCIENT AND MODERN.

CHAPTER I.

General Description of Mesopotamia and Assyria.

High Claims of these Countries on our Regard.—Interest attached to their early History.—Inquiry checked by Scantiness of authentic Records.—Little known of the Origin of either the Assyrian or Babylonian Empire, and their intimate Connexion with each other.—Definition of "Assyria" according to the Greek Historians.—The Jewish Writers.—Boundaries.—Mesopotamia.—Limits defined.—Divisions of Assyria according to Ptolemy—Strabo—D'Anville.—Mesopotamia according to Strabo.—Modern Divisions of both Provinces.—Inhabitants.—Tribes.—Arabs, and their Locations.—Kurds.—Habits.—Face of the Country.—Mountains.—Rivers.—Euphrates.—Its Course.—Scenery and Places along its Banks.—Periods of Rise and Fall.—The Tigris and Tributaries.—Its Course.—Shut el Arab.—Khabour and Hermas.—Greater and Lesser Zab.—Diala.—System of artificial Irrigation.—Nature of the ancient Canals.—Names of those on Record.—The Pallacopas.—The Nahrawan and Dijeil.—Modern Canals.—Marshes of Babylonia.—Waasut.—The Shut el Hye.—Chaldean Marshes, and Marshes of Susiana.

It may be safely asserted that there are no regions in the world which possess more powerful claims on our regard than those which form the subject of the following pages.

Mesopotamia and Assyria, if not actually the cradle of mankind, were, at all events, the theatre on which the descendants of Noah performed their first conspicuous part. The plains of Shinar witnessed not only the defeat of that presumptuous enterprise, which scattered them abroad upon the face of the earth, but also the exploits of the "Mighty Hunter," and the triumph of his ambition in the establishment of the first monarchy recorded either by sacred or profane writers.

On the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris did the two greatest cities of the ancient world rise into magnificence: Nineveh, which repented in sackcloth and ashes at the preaching of Jonah, and Babylon, the "glory of kingdoms," which, elevated by the proud Nebuchadnezzar to the height of splendour, listened to his impious boastings, and saw his deep humiliation. There did Daniel prophesy, and expound the mysterious warnings of the Most High; and there did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego experience the signal protection of that Almighty Power whom they feared and obeyed.

By the capture, too, of that superb metropolis was the word of prophecy fulfilled, and the rule of the great Cyrus —an instrument in the Divine hand—consolidated over Asia; and on the field of Arbela was that splendid empire in its turn overthrown by the rising power of the Macedonian conqueror, who, after his brilliant career, returned to the capital of Assyria to end his days.

In like manner have the plains of Mesopotamia borne witness to the catastrophe of Cunaxa, and the gallant bearing of the indomitable ten thousand; seen the defeat and death of Crassus; the retreat of Marc Antony; the fall of the apostate Julian; the disgraceful peace of his successor; and the changing fortunes of the bold Heraclius.

Events so various and important must invest the countries where they occurred with a deep interest; and that portion of them, in particular, which has reference to the early postdiluvian ages, cannot fail to excite the curiosity of those who delight in marking the moral progress of the human race. But all hope of tracing clearly the events of their early history is checked by the scantiness of means; for, while the annals of more recent times are illustrated by numerous records, the glimpses of light shed from authentic sources upon the remote period to which our views are now directed, serve only to show that, at a very uncertain era after the universal deluge, a monarchy was founded on the Euphrates by Nimrod, the son of Cush, which rose into considerable importance; and that, at some subsequent period, it was overthrown by a neighbouring power, the seat of which was on the banks of the Tigris.

Mesopotamia and Assyria have, from the most ancient times, been so intimately connected, both geographically and politically, that they will be most clearly described

in conjunction with each other. Herodotus, Strabo, and others use the latter appellation, as including both, in conjunction with certain other provinces; and Heeren adverts to this fact when he observes that the Greek historians apply the term generally to several monarchies which flourished in the regions about the Tigris and Euphrates previous to the reign of Cyrus. The Jewish writers, on the other hand, use it to express a distinct nation of conquerors, and the founders of an empire, having the seat of government at Nineveh, and which flourished between the years 800 and 700 B.C.* Hence, to define the limits of Assyria, according to the ideas of ancient historians, would be impossible, because, like those of all Eastern sovereignties, they varied with the fortune of every chief who held the sceptre. But, viewing both countries merely in the light of geographical divisions of Asia, it will not be difficult to indicate their boundaries.

Loosely speaking, Assyria may be considered as terminated on the west by the course of the Tigris, on the north by Armenia, on the northeast and east by Mount Zagros and the Gordyæan range, and on the southeast by the province of Susiana or Kuzistan.

Mesopotamia may be more strictly defined, as embraced by the Tigris and Euphrates, except on the north, where it meets the mountains of Armenia. But it will be proper to specify more exactly the various regions which are to pass under our review.

If a line were drawn from Arghana Madan by Erzen to Sert, along the crest of the intervening heights, and from thence carried behind Amadieh along the tops of Aiagha Dag or Zagros, including Solymaneah and Zohab, till it should reach the Pass of Kerrend, and extended again by a course comprehending Mendali, to a point upon the Tigris somewhat below Ctesiphon, such a line, taken in conjunction with that river from its source to the point where they meet, will circumscribe pretty accurately the ancient Assyria.

Again, if the same line were continued westward to Malatia on the Euphrates, the boundary of Mesopotamia would from thence be indicated, as already observed, by the course

* Manual of Ancient Geography, by A. H. L. Heeren. Oxford, 1829, 8vo, p. 25, 26.

of that river; but as both banks are comprehended in the basin, and may physically, as well as politically, be regarded as connected with each other, we shall include in our description all places of importance on the one as well as on the other.

By Ptolemy, Assyria is divided, from northwest to southeast, into the provinces of Arrapachitis, Adiabene (which is sometimes used to designate the whole country), Arbelitis, Calachene, Apolloniatis, and Sittacene. Aturia or Atyria, Artacene, Chalonitis, and Corduene, are also mentioned by others; but there are no means of distinctly ascertaining their respective boundaries.

Strabo describes it as conterminous with Persia and Susiana, and as comprehending Babylonia and a considerable portion of the surrounding district, the countries of the Elymæans, Parætacenians, and Chalonitis, towards Mount Zagros; the plains in the environs of Nineveh, namely, Dolomenia, Calachenia, Chazenia, and Adiabene; the valleys of the Gordyæans, and the Mygdonians of Nisibis even to Zeugma* of the Euphrates; and the vast region beyond the river inhabited by the Arabs, to the Cilicians, Phœnicians, and Libyans, and the portion of the coast comprehending the Sea of Egypt and the Gulf of Issus.†

Herodotus remarks that Babylon and the other parts of Assyria formed the ninth satrapy of Darius; and as by that historian Syria is considered as included in Assyria, this government, in his estimation, must have extended from the Mediterranean to the head of the Persian Gulf, and from Mount Taurus to the Arabian Desert.‡

D'Anville assigns to both countries nearly the same limits which we have given them, and describes Mesopotamia as a region between rivers, the Aram Naharaim of the Pentateuch,§ and called "ul Jezeerah," or the Island, by the Arabs.‖

* Or the Bridge, or place for passing the river, the site of the present Roumkala.

† Strabo, curâ Casauboni. Amst., 1763, folio, lib. xvi., p. 1070.

‡ Herodotus, curâ Wesselingii. Amst., 1763, folio, lib. iii., p. 245.

§ Beke, in his Origines Biblicæ, disputes this opinion, and conceives, upon grounds which he sets forth, that "Aram Naharaim" of the Pentateuch is to be sought in the land of Damascus, watered by the Rivers Pharphar and Abana.

‖ Géographie Ancienne, par M. D'Anville, 3 tomes, 12mo. Paris, 1768, tome ii., p. 190.

By Strabo, Mesopotamia is declared to be bounded on the north by Taurus, which separates it from Armenia; that it is largest near the mountains, where, between Thapsacus, at the passage of the Euphrates, and the point where Alexander crossed the Tigris, it is 2400 stadia broad; while between Babylon and Seleucia, the space separating the rivers does not exceed 200 stadia. He states that the Mygdonians inhabit the part near the Euphrates and the two Zeugmas; that they possess the city of Nisibis, called also Antiocha Mygdonia, at the foot of Mount Masius, that of Tigranocerta, the districts of Carrhes and Nicephorium, Chordiraza and Sinnaca; that near the Tigris, among the mountains, is the country of the Gordyæans, called by the ancients Carduchi, where also are found the Cossæans, the Parætacenians, and the Elymæans; and that the southern portions of Mesopotamia are inhabited by the Scenite Arabs, a nomade people, who live by plunder, and change their abodes when pasture and booty fail.*

It would be very difficult to assign to these several divisions a place in modern maps. The northern part of Mesopotamia, to the foot of Mount Masius, is certainly the Mygdonia of the Greeks, including Nisibin and Aljezira. To the west, and stretching southward, lies the district of Osroene, including the ancient Edessa, Charræ, and Nicephorium; Circesium (now Karkisia), at the junction of the Khabour with the Euphrates, is rather the name applied to a city than a country; and, excepting the towns upon the river's bank, there appears to have been no place of consequence between Khabour and Babylonia proper: indeed, the tract must have always been in great measure a desert. These limits extended from the Median wall which joined the two rivers, and included all the space between them, which, no doubt, was subdivided into many districts, the names of which have not reached our time. The lower part of this province obtained the designation of Chaldea, because, after the capture of Babylon, many of the inhabitants retired thither, carrying with them their arts and sciences; but this colony must be carefully distinguished from the true and ancient Chaldea, the birthplace of Terah and Abraham, the mother-country of the wise men, and, doubtless, of the race that ruled both there and in Nineveh.

* Strabo, lib. xvi., p. 1082.

Returning to the northern limits of Assyria, we find the districts of Carduchia and Corduene in the mountains between Sert and Julamerik; Arbelitis, of which the capital was Arbela, in the low lands; the plains of Dolomenia and Calachene spread around Mosul; the Gordyæans, Elymæans, and Parætacenians occupied the valleys of the Gordyæan Mountains, at whose foot, towards Kirkook, stretch the plains of Adiabene, Apolloniatis, the present Shahraban, and Chalonitis, which last appears to have been the southeastern district, bordering on Louristan and Susiana. Such, perhaps, according to our present knowledge of the ancient divisions of these provinces, is the nearest adaptation of them to modern maps.

We have now to consider the modern divisions of the countries we have undertaken to describe. The pachalic of Bagdad is at present a dependancy of the Turkish empire, and governed by a pacha sent from Constantinople. It is arranged into the following districts:

Mardin, governed by a waiwodeh.
Nisibin, ———.
Mosul, by a pacha, nominated by the Porte, but subject to the Pacha of Bagdad.
Arbel, a beg.
Kirkook, a mussellim.
Khoee, till lately subject to the men of Rewandooz.
Kewy Sanjiak, a pacha.
Solymaneah, a pacha.
Dour, a zabit.
Tecreet, a beg.
Samieh, a zabit.
Zohab, a pacha.
Khanekin, a pacha.
Mendali, a zabit.
Janan, ——.
Bagdad, residence of the pacha.
Bussora, a mussellim.
Sook el Shiook, a sheik.
Semava, a sheik.
Khezail, a sheik.
Lemlum, a sheik.
Nejeff, a mootwullee.
Kerbela, a mootwullee.
Hillah, a beg.
Jubbeh, a beg.
Hit, a beg.
Anah, a beg.
Rahaba, a beg.

To this enumeration must be added the towns on the right bank of the Euphrates, above Rahaba, most of which are included in the pachalic of Aleppo, and have been already adverted to. These, with the districts of Diarbekir, Orfa, Jezirah ul Omar, Sert, Amadieh, Accra, and some others among the Kurdish Mountains, will complete the detail of our limits in so far as territory is concerned. But besides the fixed inhabitants who form the agricultural population, and the dwellers in the towns, there are a vast number of wandering tribes, both Arabs and Kurds, who roam over its surface, paying little regard to any govern-

ment whatever. The whole country from Mardin to Karkisia, following the line of the Khabour and Hermas Rivers, has of late been overrun by the Jerbah tribe, who, attracted some years ago from Arabia by the hopes of better pasture, took possession of that part of the Jezirah. The vicinity of Bagdad is in the same manner infested by the tribe of Delaim, aided by the Jubboor.

From Semava to Hillah the country is swampy, in consequence of the Euphrates having long since broken its embankments. This tract, including what are known as the Lemlum Marshes, is held by the Khezail Arabs, who cultivate the ground, and feed large flocks of buffaloes, on which they subsist. Above Hit, the whole western bank of the river, and the country beyond it, is in the possession of numerous petty clans, who in their turn are domineered over by the Aneiza, a very powerful tribe, who range the Desert from the vicinity of Aleppo to an unknown extent inward, suffering no one to pass without their permission.

On the eastern side of the Tigris, the Chaab Arabs hold possession of the low country of Susiana from the River Kerkha to the sea; while northwest of that river, the Beni Lam exercise sovereignty until they are met by the Feilee tribes of Louristan, who feed their flocks and pillage travellers to the very neighbourhood of Mendali. From thence northward to the boundary of Assyria, between the Gordyæan Mountains and the Tigris, the country swarms with various classes of robbers, who, by their ravages, check every attempt at improvement which the inhabitants might otherwise be induced to make. Owing to these causes, as well as from the influence of a bad government, Mesopotamia and Assyria, which comprise in their extent some of the richest land in the world, are reduced almost to an unproductive desert.

The face of this extensive country, stretching nearly 800 miles from northwest to southeast, by a medium breadth of 200, exhibits great variety of soil, climate, and appearance. Thus the whole of Irak or Babylonia may be described as a rich alluvial flat, varied by marshy tracts and a few sandy stripes. Again, the lower part of Mesopotamia degenerates from a loamy deposite into a hard gravel; while the higher districts of Diarbekir, Sert, Jezirah ul Omar, Amadieh, and Solymaneah, consist of little else than a mass of mountains intersected by fertile valleys. These

ridges rise to a still greater height in the neighbourhood of Julamerik, and Mount Jewar is said to ascend at least 15,000 feet; on the other hand, the plains of Arbela and Nineveh, of Kirkook, Tooz Khoormattee, and Kufri, though in some places scorched, are yet occasionally very productive.

In like manner, while the low country is parched with the intense heat of summer, the eye may be regaled by the sight of a snowy ridge hanging like a cloud in the air; and when the inhabitants of Bagdad are panting in their *sirdabs*, or cellars under ground, whither they retire to avoid the rays of the sun, the traveller who is crossing the mountains of Kurdistan is glad to draw his cloak tightly about him, to protect his person from the cold blasts that descend from the ice-covered peaks. Thus, too, the date-tree yields its luscious fruit in perfection in the plains of Babylonia, while only the hardier fruits of northern climes can be matured in the orchards of the Kurdish highlands.

The mountain ranges of Sinjar, of Masius, and the Hamrines, are among the principal ones of Upper Mesopotamia. The exact extent and direction of the first is not well known; but it is connected, as we gather from Mr. Ainsworth, on the northeast with a series of low rounded eminences called the Babel Hills, which appear to cross the Tigris below Jezirah ibn Omar to the south of Zaco.

Mount Masius runs in a westerly direction from the Tigris to the parallel of Nisibin, when, turning towards the north at Dara, it again assumes its former line, overlooking throughout its course a very level plain. Northward from this boundary the country consists of high table lands, intersected by ridges of rocky mountains, which ar branches of Taurus, under the names of Karahjah Dag, Ali Dag, Madan, Mahrab, and Kalaat Dag. The last two are peaks of that range which divides the eastern Euphrates and the Tigris, the sources of the latter river being situated in its southern face, near the Arghana mines.

Both provinces have been by nature blessed with the means of almost unlimited fertility in the abundant streams which water them, though this benefit has been differently distributed in each. In Assyria and Upper Mesopotamia the rivers and mountain streams are numerous; and there is no want either of rain or snow to assist in bringing the crops to maturity. On the other hand, in Lower Mesopo-

tamia and Babylonia, productiveness must depend on the industry and judgment with which the inhabitants dispense the ample supplies afforded by the Tigris and Euphrates, and take advantage of their periodical inundations.

From Erzingan (eight caravan days' journey from Erzeroum), Colonel Chesney remarks* that the Euphrates may be described as a river of the first order, struggling in an exceedingly tortuous course through numerous obstacles; and, though forming frequent rapids, is still so shallow that, during the autumn, loaded camels can in some places pass it. Its velocity is from two to four miles an hour, according to season and localities. It is navigable for large boats, or, rather, rafts of 120 tons, from Erzingan probably, and certainly from Malatia, downward.† This was the case in the days of Herodotus; and the produce of Armenia might still be carried as far as Hillah, as it then was to Babylon.

The upper part of the river brought to the recollection of the colonel and his party the scenery of the Rhine below Schaffhausen, being enclosed between two parallel ranges of hills, and having its banks covered, for the most part thickly, with brushwood and timber of moderate size, with a succession of long narrow islands in its bed, on some of which are considerable towns. There are also numerous villages on either side, chiefly inhabited by Arabs, among whom the Weljee or Welda, and the Bohabour tribes appear to be the principal. From Bir downward to Hit, the stream is much interrupted with shallows and fords, where camels pass with ease; and between Racca and Anah, a distance of about 170 miles, the bed is particularly rocky. On the whole, the scenery is described as possessing a very picturesque character, not a little heightened by the frequent occurrence of ancient aqueducts formed of mason-work, coming boldly up to the water's edge, and which, owing to the frequent windings of the river, appear in every possible

* In his Report contained in the Parliamentary papers on the Euphrates Expedition.

† This seems doubtful, as Mr. Brant, British consul at Erzeroum, who crossed the river (there still called the Morad) on his way from Kharput to Malatia, at a place called Ezz Ogloo, considerably below the latter, affirms that from that place, for forty-five miles downward, it bursts through the great chain of Taurus, and forms such a succession of rapids, and runs in so rocky a channel, that no rafts or boats attempt to pass. Below that space, he says, it becomes and continues to be navigable.

variety of position. These celebrated structures will hereafter be more particularly delineated.

About ten miles below Hit, the hills almost entirely cease; there is little brushwood and few trees on the banks, and the ancient aqueducts give place to the common wheel or water-skins, raised by bullocks with ropes drawn over pulleys. The river winds less, and instead of rocks and pebbles, the bed is now formed of sand or mud, while the current is duller and deeper than before. As far as Hillah, almost the only habitations to be seen are the black hair-tents of the Bedouins, rising among patches of cultivation and clusters of date-trees. Approaching the latter place, canals for irrigation become more frequent; and near the remains of ancient Babylon, two streams called the Nil proceed from the river, one above and the other below the principal ruin, and form a lake which fertilizes much land.

For thirty miles below Hillah the banks are covered with mud villages imbedded in date-trees, to which succeed huts built neatly of reeds, with earthen forts or castles to protect the crops. Farther down, near Lemlum, the land, being flat, is easily irrigated; and here the river divides itself into several streams, the two lower of which encircle a considerable island, and in the season of flood overflow the country on either side to the extent of sixty miles. The moment that the waters recede, which happens in June, the whole of this tract is covered with crops of rice and other grain, and dotted with reed cottages. These last, when suffered to remain too long, are frequently surprised by the rising inundation; and it is no uncommon thing to see persons on foot or in their canoes following their floating village in order to arrest the materials. Not many years ago, the whole town was thus swept away; yet the inhabitants constantly rebuild their dwellings in the same spot.

In passing through these marshes, the river, which from Bir to Hillah preserves a breadth varying from 300 to 450 yards, is contracted occasionally to fifty, with a depth of from six to nine feet, and a very winding course. But at Saloa Castle, twenty miles below Lemlum, it again augments in size, and the lake on the right bank disappears.

But the eastern bank continues still low and marshy, and the country requires to be protected by *bunds* or dams, which, however, often break when the waters rise, and

much damage is occasioned. The stream, nevertheless, maintains a breadth varying from 200 to 400 yards as far as Korna, where it forms a junction with the Tigris; and from this point the united river is from 500 to 800 yards in breadth, and three to five fathoms deep.

A slight increase takes place in the Euphrates in January, but the grand flood does not commence till about the 27th of March; and it attains its height about the 20th of May, after which it falls pretty rapidly till June, when the rice and grain crops are sown in the marshes. The decrease then proceeds gradually until the middle of November, when the stream is at its lowest. The rise of the water at Anah in ordinary seasons is from ten to twelve feet; though it occasionally amounts to eighteen, entering the town, and overflowing much of the bank. At its greatest height it runs with a velocity exceeding five miles an hour, but after a decrease of twenty days there is a corresponding diminution of rapidity, insomuch that boats can track against the current.

The course of the Euphrates from Bir to Bussora has been estimated by Colonel Chesney at 1143 miles, and from Bir upward by the eastern branch to its source near Malasgird, is about 500 more, making an aggregate of fully 1600 miles.

The Tigris takes its rise in that branch of Taurus where the mines of Arghana are situated, and whence the waters flow to this river on the south, and to the Morad on the north. Bursting through the eastern part of Mount Masius, from which it receives many small tributaries, it is joined at Osmankeuy by a considerable stream, called by Kinneir the Batman Su, by the Turks Bulespena or Barema. Another large supply is afforded by the Erzen, which is said to take its rise in Susan, a district northwest of Betlis, probably in the range of Mount Niphates. It was sixty yards broad where crossed by the author now named, and reached his horse's knees. The next feeder is the Betlischai, which falls into it somewhere above Jezirah ul Omar, and was found by him to be eighty yards broad, and not fordable. He erroneously takes it for the Khabour, which, rising in the district of Amadieh, unites with the Heizel, and falls into the Tigris below Zaco.

Passing the ruins of Ctesiphon and Seleucia, the Tigris holds its course through a deep alluvial soil and marshy

land. Its banks, like those of the Euphrates, are thickly sprinkled with heaps and mounds, the vestiges of former habitations, with Arab tents or huts, and some considerable villages, among which the chief is Koote ul Amara, giving its name to the river as far as Korna. At this latter place the two great streams unite, forming, as has been seen, the Shut el Arab, though Abulfeda calls it still the Digleh or Tigris all the way to the sea.

Among the rivers of importance which have their rise in Mesopotamia are the Khabour (ancient Chaboras), and the Hermas or Huali, which unite before they fall into the Euphrates at Karkisia. Of these, the first has its source partly in the springs of Ras ul Ain, and partly at a greater distance in the northwest; the second originates in Mount Masius, and flows by Nisibin and Sinjar to lose itself in the other.

The greater Zab is formed of many streams which flow from the Kurdish Mountains. It is joined about twenty-five miles from its confluence with the Tigris by the Gomel, the ancient Bumadus, which has its rise north of Accra. The lesser Zab, too, derives its waters from various sources. One large branch from Lahijan in Kurdistan, called the Ak-su, runs by Sardasht, and, joined by another stream from the vicinity of Banna, unites with that which passes through the Keuy Sanjiak valley, above Altun Kupri. The rest, though considerable, are less known.

The Diala issues from the Koh Saugur, between Hamadan and Kermanshah, from whence, bursting through a pass of the Shahu Mountains, and receiving many tributaries in its course, it forces its way through the remarkable defile of Darnah, where there are still the ruins of a town and castle. From thence, receiving an accession at Gundar, it enters the singular plain of Semiram by a tremendous gorge, and assumes a southwesterly course until it unites with the Hulwan River near Khanekin. Previous to this it is called the Shirwan, from an ancient city of that name, past the ruins of which it flows; but after its junction it assumes the appellation of the Diala, which it retains till it falls into the Tigris a little below Bagdad.

Having thus described the principal rivers of these countries, it will be proper also to give some idea of the system of artificial irrigation which was so essential to the prosperity of the alluvial districts.

The fertility of Babylonia has been the theme of all ancient writers. Herodotus remarks that this province and the rest of Assyria were by Darius constituted the ninth satrapy of his empire, and that it contributed a full third part of the revenues of the state. This great productiveness did not arise from the soil in its natural state, for at this day it produces little besides a scanty sprinkling of tamarisks, thorns, or salsugineous plants. It was effected by the wisdom of a judicious monarch, who, aiding the efforts of an industrious people, supplied the means of irrigation from the periodical floods of the Euphrates and Tigris. The same historian, Diodorus, and others, inform us of great hydraulic operations being conducted by several sovereigns of Babylon; and of these the magnificent system of canals by which the flat surface of the land was divided into sections, all within reach of the water, was, no doubt, the most important. The traveller, in passing over the face of the country, now almost a desert, meets everywhere with vestiges which prove how completely traversed it once was by such arteries of fructification. It is remarkable, too, that all these canals, instead of having been sunk in the earth, like those of the present day, were entirely constructed on the surface; a fact which proves not only the superior skill of the engineers of antiquity, but the infinitely greater attention to agriculture paid in those times by farmers or peasantry. By what means the water was raised to fill these conduits, does not in every case appear; whether by dikes thrown across the river, or by depressing its bed at the point of derivation. The former expedient was certainly adopted in many instances on the Athem, on the Diala, on the Tigris above Samarra, and on the Euphrates near Hit. But it must be recollected that the country contiguous to both rivers, and the Euphrates in particular, was protected by embankments from the periodical rise of their streams, a measure which, by confining the water, raised it so as to fill these canals. In this manner they served the double purpose of vents for drawing off the dangerous superabundance of the fluid, and collecting it for the beneficial purpose of irrigation.

The principal canals mentioned by ancient geographers are the Nahr-raga, the Nahr Sares, the Fluvius Regius, the Kutha, and the Pallacopas. The first of these, which, according to Pliny, has its origin at Sippara or Hippara,

appears to occupy the place of the Nahr Isa, which, derived from the Euphrates at Dehmah near Anbar, joined the Tigris in the western part of that city.

The Nahr Sares of Ptolemy is by D'Anville considered as identical with the Nahr Sarsar of Abulfeda, who describes it as rising below the former, as passing through the level country between Bagdad and Cufa, and joining the Tigris between Bagdad and Madayn. Mr. Ainsworth says "this corresponds to the present Zimberaniyah," and remarks that Ammianus Marcellinus notices a canal between Macepracta and Perisabor on the Nahr Malikah, which must be the Sarsar.*

The *Fluvius Regius* of Ptolemy is undoubtedly the Nahr Malikah of the Arabian geographers, which, according to Ammianus, was drawn from Perisaboras on the Euphrates, and is said by Abulfeda to have joined the Tigris below Madayn. It was one of the most ancient, as well as most important of these works in Babylonia, being attributed by tradition to Cush, and to Nimrod king of Babel; while Abydenus, with more probability, attributes it to Nebuchadnezzar.

We are told that, about seven miles below the Nahr Malikah, a second canal was derived from the Euphrates, which traversed the country nearly parallel with the others, and, like them, emptied itself into the Tigris. In its course it passed the old city of Kutha, supposed to have derived its name from Cush, the father of Nimrod, whose posterity possessed the land.†

These are the four canals supposed to have been passed by the army of Cyrus the younger, after the battle of Cunaxa, on their way to Sittace; and, from the position of these works, a good idea may be obtained of the method of irrigation in those days. The country was intersected by them at intervals of six or eight miles, and could thus be watered throughout its whole extent by smaller ones derived from the principal conduits.

But, besides these larger channels, there were many of inferior size, constructed to supply particular towns and dis-

* Researches in Assyria, Babylonia, and Chaldea, by William Ainsworth, F.G.S., &c., 8vo, London, 1838, p. 163–165.

† Mr. Ainsworth (Researches, p. 166) thinks that this town of Kutha may be represented by the ruins and mounds of the Towebah, which by some are considered as the northern quarter of ancient Babylon.

tricts, each quarter of Babylon itself being provided with water in that manner. The numerous dry beds still to be seen in all directions, prove the extent to which the system was carried.

Nearly twenty-two miles below the point of derivation of the Kutha canal, as we are told by the same geographer, the Frat divided itself into two streams, the more southern of which passes beyond Cufa into the marshes of Roomyah. The other and larger branch flows opposite the Kasr ibn Hobeirah, and bears the name of the Nahr Soora.*

The former branch of the Euphrates here spoken of is, we believe, the same that now forms the lake called the Sea of Nejeff, and which sweeps round till it joins the marshes of Roomyah.

It is probable that hence was derived the great canal of Pallacopas, which appears to have been executed in the very early days of the Babylonian monarchy, and intended, perhaps, as much to promote agriculture by means of irrigation, as to drain a mass of waters injurious to health and improvement.

We learn from Arrian that much expense was incurred by the governors of Babylon in restraining an over-abundant flow through the Pallacopas into the fenny districts; and that, therefore, Alexander, willing to do the Assyrians a benefit, resolved to dam up that entrance from the Euphrates. He proposed that a cut should be made about thirty furlongs from the mouth of the canal, where the soil was rocky, being satisfied that much water would be thereby saved, and its distribution better regulated.†

From the first part of this account we should be led to think that the ancient canal had its commencement, at least, in what Abulfeda terms the southern branch of the Euphrates, as through this the water reached the marshes. From the second it would appear as if Alexander had pursued his intention of effectually damming up the overflow of the river in the old bed of the canal, and made a fresh

* Mr. Ainsworth (Researches, p. 171, 172) calls it Nahr Surah or Sares, and from thence deduces its identity with the Nahr Sares of Ptolemy ; but we believe it was called Nahr Soora from the name of a town in its vicinity.

† Arriani Historia, curâ Gronovii, Lugd. Bat., 1704, folio, lib. vii., p. 302.

opening at the distance of thirty furlongs in firmer ground. The circumstance of his sailing down the Euphrates to the mouth of the Pallacopas, and through that canal to the place where he built the town now called Meshed Ali, would lead to the supposition that the new cut must have been about the parallel of Cufa or Dewannieh. That the Pallacopas was continued to the sea, into which it emptied itself somewhere about Teredon, is certain, although its channel is now nearly obliterated; for both Colonel Chesney and Lieutenant Ormsby, in journeying westward from Bussora, found its bed between Zobeir and the Jibel Sanam, which is the site of ancient Teredon. The last named of these gentlemen found that it was sixty paces broad; and his guide told him that, in travelling along its channel all the way from Khor Abdullah (the supposed ancient mouth of the Euphrates) to Hillah, mounds, with the usual vestiges of old buildings, are frequently met with on its banks. In the days of Abulfeda, however, the Pallacopas was no longer in operation, and the waters seem to have escaped by their old vent into the marshes, the work of Alexander having probably given way. Of late, the higher portion of the Babylonian fens received a great augmentation from the damage done to the embankments of the river in the memorable inundation of 1830. For many years previous to that time, the Montefic Arabs had farmed the whole western side of the Euphrates from the Pacha of Bagdad at a certain sum, and upon condition of maintaining in good order the *huds* which prevented it from overflowing the country from Sook el Shiook to Hit. In that year these embankments were swept away, and have not since been replaced, so that the river, when in flood, has a free passage into the Bahr e Nejeff.

These were the principal canals derived from the Euphrates in this quarter. No doubt there were many others in the level districts of Mesopotamia, but they are less known; and it is highly probable that the alluvial territory between the Hye, the Tigris, and the Euphrates, was equally well supplied with such means of irrigation. In like manner, the districts about Bussora bear marks of having been anciently supplied with conduits, though most of the names are now lost.

The waters of the Tigris have also been made subservient to the purposes of agriculture by means of various ca-

nals; and two of these merit especial mention. The first was the Nahrawan, the most magnificent, indeed, of all similar works achieved by the ancient kings of Babylon. Its sources were threefold. The first, issuing from the river at the point where it cuts the Hamrine hills, ran distant from the parent stream about six or seven miles towards the ancient town of Samarra, where it was joined by the second conduit. This last, leaving the Tigris at a place called Guntree Rissassee, fell into the other, which then received the name or Nahrawan, and the united current ran nearly south-southeast towards the Athem, absorbing first the superfluous waters of the Nahr But, then the Athem itself, next the Nahr Raathan, and, finally, a third cut from the river at Gaim. Hence it proceeded generally at the distance of from six to twelve miles from the course of the Tigris, as it flowed in those days, but approaching it at Bagdad; a little after which it crossed the Diala, exhausting its contents, which were raised to a proper level by a bund.

In like manner, this gigantic aqueduct stretched onward till, entering Kuzistan, it absorbed all the streams from the Lour and Buckharee Mountains, and at length joined the Kerkha, or, as some say, was lost in the marshes of that part of Susiana.

In its long course of nearly 400 miles, this canal, which equalled the Tigris in size, being from 250 to 400 feet broad, fertilized a vast district of country, sending off numerous branches on both sides, and one, in particular, to Jarjarya, not far from Koote ul Amara.

On its margin are found ruins of various buildings, and on either bank the sites of towns and cities, which once derived wealth from the commerce or agriculture it encouraged, and which, with it, have sunk into ruin. Much of the marsh now existing in the line of its course has been formed by the waters it formerly directed to useful purposes; and those of the Diala, in particular, have forced a passage to the Tigris below Bagdad, converting much land, once carefully cultivated, into a swampy waste.

Second to the Nahrawan, but also of great importance, is the Dijeil Canal, which issued from the right bank of the Tigris some miles below Samarra. It flows parallel to that river to within twenty-five miles of Bagdad, and even now fertilizes a large extent of territory, which, however, is at present in the hands of the Jerbah Arabs.

The following canals are still in operation, and exhibit a melancholy contrast with the magnificent catalogue of antiquity:

1. The Boogharaib, deriving its waters from the Euphrates below Felugia, joins the marshes of Bagdad.

2. The Massoodee, drawn from a swamp fed from the Euphrates, and falls into the Tigris two hours below the former.

3. The Daoodee (cut by Daood Pacha), which connects the two just mentioned.

4. The Rithwannieh issues from the Euphrates southwest from Bagdad, and joins the Tigris below the Massoodee.

5. The Mahmoodee, which has its supplies from the Euphrates, flows towards Seleucia, but is exhausted in the process of irrigation.

There are a few smaller cuts between these last and the town of Hillah, but they water comparatively little ground.

6. The Khalis (on the Assyrian side of the Tigris), supplied by the Diala, runs nearly seventy miles with a winding course towards the southwest, that brings it to within twenty miles of Bagdad.

7. The Khoraisan, which flows from the opposite side of the same river, has nearly an equal course in a southeasterly direction.

With the exception of the last two, these canals are works of very inferior extent and importance to the ancient ones.

8. The Dijeil, already described, is ancient, but now almost entirely filled up.

Besides these, there are several near Bussora, such as the Nahr Kerbela leading to that place, and the Nejeff constructed by Nadir Shah, of the present state of which we are ignorant. Mr. Ainsworth* mentions a system of irrigating ducts near Gerah, as the Mejilah, the Jemilah, the Antar, the Jamidah, and others; and there are similar works opposite Semava, including the extensive line of the Shatrah Canal, which gives numerous offsets to the Euphrates, and unites with the Hye near its mouth. With the exception of the irrigation accomplished by means of the water-wheel on the banks of the rivers, it is from the

* Researches, p. 127.

operation of these cuts that the whole agricultural produce of the present Babylonia is still raised, the food of the inhabitants provided, and the revenue furnished.

The *Marshes* of that district must here also claim a few words. The first to be noticed is the great tract already alluded to which lies near Hillah, and is seen stretching out like a vast sea.

These swamps are fed by the Euphrates at the season of its great rise, the embankments which restrained its waters having been destroyed. They communicate with the Roomyah and Lemlum Marshes, through which the river winds, but probably also send a considerable portion of their fluid down the ancient Pallacopas, and to an unknown distance into the Arabian desert.

The Lemlum themselves are the next in succession southward, though connected with the former, and constituting part of the *Paludes Babyloniæ*, in which many of the galleys of Alexander lost their way when they accompanied him on his voyage. These marshes, according to Colonel Chesney, occupy a space of sixty miles in breadth, and rather more in length. A considerable portion of them, however, is cultivated by Khezail Arabs.

Mr. Ainsworth says that there is but a narrow band of soil between them and the Tigris; but in this he is mistaken, as actual observation has proved that they extend rather towards the Hye than to that river.

The next fenny tract is the one that surrounds the ruins of Workha, considered by Mr. Ainsworth and Colonel Taylor to be the district of Chaldea proper; and which, doubtless, is connected with the marshes of Lemlum. Of its extent there exists no accurate information, as the nature of the country renders travelling there extremely difficult.

Communicating with this watery land by creeks or ditches, if not by a continuity of swampy ground, is the valley of the Boo je Heirat and Shut el Hye. This valley appears once to have been the bed of the Tigris itself, for Abulfeda distinctly says that Waasut was intersected by the Digleh, which was spanned by a bridge of boats. This city, the ancient Cascara, and the seat of one of the bishops of early Christianity, was once populous, rich, well cultivated, and flourishing. The industry of the inhabitants restrained within proper embankments the over-

abundance of the waters with which it was surrounded; but when wars and troubles arose, these were either neglected or destroyed, and the populous province accordingly returned to a state of nature, and became a country of lakes and morasses.

Mr. Ainsworth considers this Waasut to be the seat of the ancient Cybate, and adopts the opinion that the Nahrawan which appears in the valley is the same which originates at Samarra on the Tigris. Probably some of the lakes described by Abulfeda represented in his day the Chaldean one of Pliny, which, according to the English traveller, lay beyond the former course of the Tigris and Nahrawan, and was, no doubt, connected with it. The whole country east of the Hye is indeed of a very low and marshy character, "while the dry land on the banks of the Euphrates stretches beyond the Shut el Hye, protected by the date-plantations, the rampart-enclosed reed huts, and the more stable habitations of the Montefic Arabs from Kut (Koote), by Sook el Shiook to Omu el Bak, the 'mother of moschetoes;' the inland country to the east and to the west in the parallel of the 'Sheik's Market-town' becomes already occupied by an almost perpetual inundation; and at Omu el Bak the waters spread from the banks of the river in every direction like a great lake, extending to the extreme verge of the horizon, and only here and there interrupted by groves of date-trees, and occasional huts islanded in the desert of waters. On the ascent of the steamer Euphrates in the latter end of October, and the descent of the same vessel in the beginning of November, 1836, the extent of this great inundation had undergone very little diminution from what it had been in the month of June, nearly at the period of the great floods."* But few particulars are known of the former extent of the several lakes or morasses which are separated by slips of higher land, where the Beni Ruffeyah and other Arabs pitch their tents. At the end of this Chaldean lake Pliny places Ampe, which Mr. Ainsworth is disposed to think is now represented by Korna, at the junction of the two rivers. D'Anville, however, considers this town as identical with Ptolemy's Apamea and the Digla of Pliny. On the other side of the present bed of the Tigris are found the marshes of Susiana,

* Ainsworth's Researches, p. 128, 129.

which, if the river formerly ran through the valley of the Hye, must have been continuous with the Chaldean Lake, or only separated by the low territory of the Messina of Pliny, Ptolemy, Strabo, and others. Indeed, the whole country of Susiana, which lies on the left bank of the current, appears to be little more than one succession of morasses.

CHAPTER II.

History of the Assyrian Monarchy.

Uncertainty of the Chronology of these Periods.—Necessity of adopting some consistent System of Notation.—Errors of Usher, Lloyd, and others.—Discrepancy of Opinion between various Authors.—Mode of Notation adopted.—Sources of Information.—Sacred Writ.—Greek Historians.—Herodotus—Ctesias.—Commencement of the Assyrian Empire according to each.—Syncellus and Polyhistor.—Beke's "Origines Biblicæ."—Scriptural Account.—Lists of Kings of both Monarchies to the Fall of Babylon.—Claims of Ctesias to Credit discussed.—Opinions divided.—His Account of the Assyrian Monarchy.—Ninus.—Semiramis.—Ninyas, &c.—Thonos Concolerus.—His Identity with Sardanapalus.—Errors of Ctesias.—History of the Monarchy according to Scripture and Ptolemy's Canon.—Asshur Founder of it.—Pul.—Tiglath-Pileser.—Shalmaneser.—Sennacherib.—Esarhaddon, supposed to be the warlike Sardanapalus.—Saosducheus, &c.—Various Conjectures.—Nabuchodonosor.—Fall of Nineveh—And of the Assyrian Empire.

Having thus given a description of the boundaries, divisions, and general aspect of the countries hereafter to be more minutely delineated, we shall endeavour, as succinctly as possible, to sketch the history of the monarchies of which, from the earliest times, they were the seat. This is a task of no ordinary difficulty; for so obscure is the chronology of those remote periods, and perplexing are the names and actions attributed by various writers to individuals who are said to have flourished during them, that, in spite of the numerous attempts to connect the detached notices on the subject, it still remains not a little dark and confused. As an instance of this, and of the discrepancy which prevails among chronologists on some of the most important epochs, it may be mentioned that Dr. Hales, in

his learned work, recites upward of 120 several opinions in reference to the interval which elapsed between the creation of the world and the birth of our Saviour, and the extremes are removed from each other by no less than 3268 years. A difference of 1142 years occurs, in like manner, among authors in fixing the era of the Deluge; they disagree, also, to the extent of 300 years regarding the time of the fall of Nineveh; and a like diversity prevails upon the date of the Exode of the Jews from Egypt.

An attempt to reconcile the various systems that have produced such discordant opinions would be but an idle waste of time, and unsuited to a work of this nature, which professes rather to give results than to enter into laboured disquisitions. It is proposed only to state the issue of the most successful investigations on the subject of the ancient Babylonish and Assyrian monarchies. But, in order to succeed even in this, some system of chronology must be adopted, and we shall shortly explain the nature of that which has been preferred.

It is generally known that the scheme of Usher, Lloyd, and others, which furnishes the marginal dates in the authorized version of the Scriptures, and was adopted in the eighth century in place of the more ancient notation of the Septuagint, is now held to be altogether erroneous. The era of creation, according to that account, is only 4004 years anterior to the birth of Christ.

The following are considered as among the highest authorities on this subject:

Josephus, according to various authors	5555 5481 5402 4698
The Septuagint	5586 5508
Syncellus	5500
Pezron	5872
Eusebius	5200
Jackson	5426
Hales	5411

Dr. Russell, who, in his "Connexion of Sacred and Profane History,"* has examined this subject with great assiduity and learning, and who has consulted not only the writings of Jewish and pagan historians, and of the early

* Vol. i., Preliminary Dissertation; and vol. ii., chap. i.

fathers, but also the works of the most distinguished modern chronologists, inclines to fix this important point in the year B.C. 5441, which, being nearly a mean of the best authorities, we will venture to adopt as that by which to determine such dates as admit of precise notation. On the same grounds, he places the era of the Deluge in

. . . . . B.C.3185

Or after the Creation 2256

Making, till the era of redemption . . . 5441

Assuming, therefore, this point as established, we shall proceed to the history of those early ages so far as there are grounds on which to base our narrative.

The principal sources of information are, first, the Scriptures of the Old Testament; and, secondly, the writings of several Greek historians who have treated of those times.

Of these last, the two most important are, Herodotus, who lived about the year B.C. 430, contemporary with Nehemiah and Malachi, and who himself visited Babylon and saw its condition only a hundred years after it was taken by Cyrus. The other is Ctesias, a physician of Cnidos, who, accompanying Cyrus the younger in that quality on his expedition against his brother Artaxerxes Mnemon, was taken prisoner at the battle of Cunaxa, B.C. 399, and resided at the court of that monarch seventeen years.

From the writings of these two historians, it will be found that all subsequent annalists and geographers, including Diodorus and Strabo, have chiefly drawn their materials; and it is these original elements, multiplied and often distorted by the theories and conjectures of numerous commentators, that supply all the information we really possess regarding those early and obscure periods in the history of man.

The authors of the "Universal History," a work of deep erudition and research, incline to reject almost entirely the testimony of Ctesias, whose long list of kings, with its mixture of Greek, Egyptian, Persian, and Median names, seems to destroy the pretensions of its compiler to veracity; while they attach much credit to the accounts of Herodotus, as agreeing far better than those of other historians with the chronology of Sacred Writ and the few insulated facts that can be brought to bear upon the subject.

According to their computation, after this historian, the Assyrian monarchy commenced 1236 B.C., and continued 520 years.*

Dr. Russell, in his very elaborate examination of the question, for which we must refer our readers to the work itself (vol. ii., chap. i.), comes to the conclusion that the account of Ctesias is by no means to be altogether rejected; and the result of his inquiry is to place the origin of the Assyrian empire in the year . . . B.C.2126
Or after the Flood 1059

3185

which, with the assumed period from the Creation to the Flood of 2256

makes, up to the birth of Christ 5441

And he observes that this comes to within one year of the date fixed by Ctesias for the commencement of his catalogue of the Assyrian monarchs, the accession of Ninus being placed in the year B.C. 2127.

Proceeding with his retrospect, and quoting from the Chronographia of Syncellus of the Chaldean kings who succeeded Nimrod at Babylon, Dr. Russell carries back the commencement of that monarch's reign, or the origin of the first Babylonish monarchy, to the year 601, or 619 after the Deluge, that is, to B.C. 2566: the difference between the two former sums arising from an equivalent difference assigned to the duration of certain reigns, according to Syncellus and Alexander Polyhistor. A third dynasty has been added to these by Moses of Chorene, an Armenian historian, who quotes from Abydenus, a compiler of Chaldean records; but he inclines to reject this as being quite unknown to the two former authors.

It is to be observed that these three later and Christian writers are the only ones who have touched upon this portion of Babylonian history; all others commencing their labours only where Sacred Writ terminates its short but invaluable notices upon this dark era.

This fact has been prominently set forward by Mr. Beke in his laborious and interesting work of "Origines Biblicæ," in which he examines with great ingenuity every-

* Ancient Universal History, 8vo, Lond., 1747–1754, vol. iv., p. 264–270.

thing which has been presented to us on these important points in the Sacred Volume, and rejects almost entirely all other evidence upon the subject as fabulous and unsatisfactory.

It must, in fact, be confessed that, with regard to the earliest period of the Babylonian annals, we have no other source of information worthy of any credit besides the Bible; and all which we learn there is the bare fact that, at a certain time, a son or descendant of Cush attained to great power, and founded a kingdom, "the beginning of which was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar."*

In the same manner, the whole which we are told regarding the foundation of an Assyrian kingdom is, that at some period, equally undetermined, "out of that land [of Shinar] went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah."† It is true that the proper reading of this passage has been much disputed; for many authorities, both English and German, contend that its true meaning is, that Nimrod went forth as a conqueror into the land of Asshur, and builded Nineveh and the other towns. In either case, Asshur must have preceded Nimrod, as we find the country already called by his name; and farther down we are informed that he was a son or descendant of Shem.

Of the kingdom of Babylon we hear no more from Scripture history till the days of Merodach Baladan, B.C. 721, who revolted from the Assyrians and wrote to King Hezekiah; while the first mention of an Assyrian monarch is in the year B.C. 821, when Jonah was sent to one in Nineveh, who by some is supposed to be identical with the Arbaces of Ctesias.

Considering as we do the Sacred Volume as containing the only undoubted source of information on this subject, down to the era of Nabonassar, B.C. 747, when the Canon of Ptolemy, founded on astronomical observation, commences (Nabonassar having himself destroyed all records of antecedent kings and dynasties), it would still be improper, in a work of this sort, to pass over entirely the testimony of historians who have written from such sources as were open to them, and which, among a great mass of

* Gen., x., 10. † Gen., x., 11, 12.

error and fable, unquestionably contains some facts which may be reconciled with those that proceed from less doubtful sources. We shall therefore give a succinct account of the origin of the two monarchies, as it appears in the most accredited histories; and, in order to assist the reader in comprehending the chronology of the period, we have framed the accompanying table, upon the data already referred to, showing the dynasties, names of kings, periods of their respective reigns, and the year of their accession before the Christian era, from the rise of the Babylonian power under Nimrod, and that of Assyria under Asshur, down to the extinction of both by the arms of the renowned Cyrus in the year B.C. 536.

BABYLON.

Chaldean Kings.

	Years.	B.C.
1. Nimrod, 619 years after the Deluge, founds a kingdom in the land of Shinar, and reigned	6	2566
2. Chomasbolus	7½	2560
3. Porus	35	2552
4. Nechubes	43	2517
5. Abius	48	2474
6. Oniballus	40	2426
7. Zinzirus	45	2386
	224½	

Arab Kings.

1. Mardocentes deposes Zinzirus in		2341
And reigned	45	
2. Name and period lost, say	40	2296
3. Sisimardacus	28	2256
4. Nabius	37	2228
5. Parannus	40	2191
6. Nabonnebus	25	2151
	215	
Deposed and slain by Ninus in		2126

ASSYRIA.

Asshur, period unknown, went out from Shinar and built Nineveh and other cities.

No account of his successors till the time of Ninus.

ASSYRIAN EMPIRE.

Assyrian Kings according to Ctesias.

		Years.	B.C
1.	Ninus, conquered Babylon in		2126
	Reigned	52	
2.	Semiramis	42	2074
3.	Ninyas	38	2032
4.	Arius	30	1994
5.	Aralius	40	1964
6.	Xerxes or Balæus	30	1924
7.	Armanithres	38	1894
8.	Belochus	35	1857
9.	Balæus	52	1821
10.	Sethos, Altadas	35	1769
11.	Mamythus	30	1734
12.	Ascalius or Mascaleus	30	1704
13.	Sphærus	28	1674
14.	Mamylus	30	1646
15.	Sparthæus	40	1616
16.	Ascatades	42	1576
17.	Amyntes	50	1534
18.	Belochus II.	25	1484
19.	Baletores or Baletaras	34	1459
20.	Lamprides	37	1425
21.	Sosares	20	1388
22.	Lampares	30	1368
23.	Panyas	45	1338
24.	Sosarmus	42	1293
25.	Mithræus	37	1251
26.	Teutamus or Tautanus	32	1214
27.	Teutæus	44	1182
28.	Thineus	30	1138
29.	Dercylus	40	1108
30.	Empacmes	38	1068
31.	Laosthenes	45	1030
32.	Pertiades	30	985
33.	Ophræteus	21	955
34.	Ephecheres	52	934
35.	Acraganes	42	882
36.	Thonos Colcolerus or Sardanapalus	20	841
	Under this monarch occurred the revolt of the Medes and Babylonians, which terminated in a separation of the monarchy once more into the Babylonian and Assyrio-Median States		821

Babylonian Sovereigns according to Scripture and Ptolemy.

Earlier Sovereigns unknown, probably Belesis and his family.

		Years.	B.C
1.	Nabonassar; the era of this monarch's accession ascertained by astronomical calculation, reigned	14	747

	Years.	B C.
2. Nadius	2	733
3. Chinzirus	5	731
4. Jugæus	5	726
5. Merodach Baladan	12	721
Revolts from the Assyrians, and writes to King Hezekiah		710
6. Arcianus	5	709
1st Interregnum	2	704
7. Belibus	3	702
8. Apronadius	6	699
9. Regibelus	1	693
10. Mesessemordak	4	692
2d Interregnum	8	688
11. Esarhaddon subdues Babylon, and reduces it to a tributary state	13	680
12. Saosducheus or Nebuchadnezzar I.	20	667
13. Chyniladan	22	647
14. Nabopolassar or Labynetus	21	625
In alliance with Cyaxares, who takes Nineveh		606

Assyrian Sovereigns according to Scripture and Ptolemy.

	B.C.
1. King of Assyria, mentioned in Jonah, unnamed, probably identical with Arbaces of Ctesias	821
Jonah's prophecy about	800
2. Pul or Belus, Mandauces of Ctesias	790
1st Invasion of Israel	770
3. Tiglath-pileser	747
2d Invasion of Israel	740
4. Shalmaneser	726
3d Invasion of Israel	722
5. Sennacherib	714
1st Invasion of Judea	711
6. Esarhaddon, Assarhaddon, or Sardanapalus I.	710
In this reign the Medes and Babylonians again revolt; the former elect Dejoces for their king; the latter, under Merodach Baladan, assert their independence.	
Babylon reconquered	680
2d Invasion of Judea, and captivity of Manasseh	674
7. Ninus III.	667
8. Nabuchodonosor I.	658
Defeat of Arphaxad or Phraortes the Mede	641
3d Invasion of Judea by Holofernes	640
9. Sarac, or Sardanapalus II.	636
Nineveh taken by Cyaxares in alliance with Nabopolassar	606

Babylonian Empire after the Capture of Nineveh, according to Scripture, Ptolemy, Berosus, Herodotus, and Xenophon.

	Years.	B.C
1. Nabopolassar throws off the Assyrian yoke, Nineveh being destroyed, reigned	2	606

		Years.	B.C.
2	Nabocolassar, Bochtanser, or Nebuchadnezzar	43	604
	Subdues Persia or Elam		596
3.	Evil Merodach	3	561
4.	Nericassolassar, Neriglissar, or Belshazzar*	5	558
5.	Laborosoarshod did not reign a year.		
6.	Nabonadius or Labynetus II. appointed by Cyaxares or Darius the Mede*	17	553
	Babylon taken by Cyrus, and the empire terminated		536

It is unnecessary to repeat the lists of Chaldean and Arabian kings which appear in the table, as no particulars whatever are given of their reigns. The last of them, if they ever had an existence, was overthrown and probably put to death by the celebrated Ninus, the first in Ctesias's catalogue of Assyrian rulers, who at this time waxed great, and succeeded in uniting under one sovereign the crowns of Assyria and Babylon.

Of the monarchs who filled the throne of Assyria, from the foundation of the empire by Asshur till the accession of Ninus, no record has reached our times, either in profane or in sacred history; and the magnitude and duration of the empire itself can only be inferred from the fact that it contained many rich and populous cities, and became so powerful as to overthrow the might of Babylon. As, however, the whole narrative touching the following race of kings rests upon the authority of Ctesias, it may be well to examine shortly what degree of credit is due to his writings.

That he had good opportunities for observation and inquiry cannot be denied; for he enjoyed the favour of the monarch at whose court he lived, and had access, it is asserted, to the records of the empire, preserved from a remote period.

But, in the first place, we are met by the fact already stated, that Nabonassar had, previously to the time he treats of, destroyed all, or, at any rate, most of the national records; and, in the second, unfortunately for his credit, he did not confine himself to those things concerning which he might have had personal knowledge. Besides, the account he wrote of India was such as to stamp him in the minds of all his readers as a perfect romancer: hence the great Aristotle, nearly his contemporary, declares him to be a writer entitled to no belief; and others of the ancients

* Hales.

have been equally severe on him. "Who can see Ninus at the head of millions of men, at a time when the earth must have been but thinly inhabited, when mankind must have been a good deal in a state of simplicity and nature; who can read this without arraigning the historian of falsehood and forgery? Or who can read his story of Semiramis—her mighty valour and heroic deeds at the age of twenty or thereabout; her two millions of men employed in the building of Babylon; her 300,000 skins of black oxen made up in the form of elephants, and other things of this nature—and not conclude that what contained it was no genuine history, but a most barefaced romance?"*

Then, continues the same writer, the very medley of names, Greek, Egyptian, and Persian, argue his list to be the grossest forgery. In the canon of Scripture, all the five names recorded are evidently Assyrian, being derived from the names of their gods: thus we find Pul or *Phul*, Tiglath-pileser for Tiglath-*pul-assur*, Shalmaneser for Shalman-*assur*, and Esarhaddon for *Assur*-haddon; whereas no such analogy is observable in the lists of Ctesias and his followers. Again, the length and equality of the reigns is against all experience and probability: besides which, there exist anachronisms and discrepancies from sacred history which condemn him; for, according to him, Ninus and Abraham must have existed together, as the former, by his account, conquered Persia, Media, Egypt, Assyria, and all Asia in the days of the patriarch, while no trace of any such events is to be found in Scripture. On the contrary, the succession of rulers given in the Bible is totally inconsistent with the fabled conquests by Ninus and Semiramis.

Dr. Russell, on the other hand, is inclined to repose far greater confidence in the testimony of Ctesias, partly because, he argues, it does not appear that the historian could have had any motive for fabricating a falsehood, and partly because there are strong grounds for believing that some, at least, of the sovereigns and conquerors he mentions actually had existence, and performed some of the exploits attributed to them. But for the long and elaborate chain of reasoning by which he arrives at the conclusion that the term of duration and list of kings assigned by that his-

* Ancient Universal History, vol. iv., p. 265.

torian to the Assyrian monarchy, from its foundation by Ninus to its extinction under Thonos Concolerus or Sardanapalus, are worthy of credit and adoption, we must refer to the work itself,* as it is too long for insertion here, and depends too much upon a nice comparison of dates and events to admit of abridgment. With these remarks upon the credibility of Ctesias, we shall proceed to give a short account of his history.

Ninus, the first-mentioned sovereign, is represented as a martial and ambitious prince, who, conceiving the idea of extensive conquest, trained up the youth of his kingdom to warlike usages and personal endurance. By these means, having created a formidable army, he entered into a league with the King of Arabia, by whose assistance he overran Babylonia, reduced its cities and strongholds, carrying the royal family away to captivity and death.

Armenia, his next object, would have fallen an easy prey, had not its king, Barzanus, appeased the conqueror with gifts, and consented to become his vassal. Pharnus, the sovereign of Media, was next overthrown and put to death; and, if we are to credit the historian, in seventeen years Ninus appears to have brought into subjection the greater part of Asia, except India and Bactriana; probably the vast regions of Tartary also remained untouched. Having led his victorious army back to his own country, he employed the treasures he had amassed, and the multitude of people he had collected, in building the city of Nineveh, the origin of which is in Scripture assigned to Asshur, at probably a much earlier period, unless, with some, we should conclude that Ninus and he are the same person.

An expedition against the Bactrians having failed, the great conqueror, after constructing the stupendous city described by our author, proceeded a second time against that nation; and the enterprise was not more remarkable for the success which attended the arms of the Assyrian monarch, than for its being the occasion of his union with the renowned Semiramis, whose name is so well known in the ancient history of the East, although chronologers cannot agree within 1500 years as to the period of her existence.

So extraordinary a heroine could not in those days be

* Connexion of Sacred and Profane History, vol. ii., c. l.

permitted to have a mere human origin; and, accordingly, Ctesias ascribes her birth to the amour of a certain goddess, named Derceto by the Greek writers, with an obscure youth who was sacrificing at her altar. The infant, abandoned by its mother near Ascalon in Syria, was reared, according to tradition, by flocks of pigeons, from which circumstance these birds were held sacred in Syria; and the name of Semiramis is by some asserted to be derived from a word in that language signifying a dove.

The fact probably is, assuming the reality of her existence, that she was a woman of low origin, but remarkable for beauty of person and vigour of mind. By these qualities she captivated the heart of Menon, governor of Syria, who married her, and had by her two children. In the end he became so attached to her, that, when forced to accompany his sovereign into Bactriana, he desired her to repair to the camp in disguise. She obeyed, and made her appearance in a dress calculated to conceal her sex, and yet to set off her charms so much, that the Persian ladies afterward assumed it.

Ninus, who on this occasion is said to have led against Bactriana the incredible multitude of 1,700,000 foot, 210,000 horse, and 10,600 scythe-armed chariots, had already reduced the whole country, with its numerous and populous cities, except the capital, which was still maintained by its king Oxyartes. The acute and intelligent observations of Semiramis upon the conduct of the siege first attracted the great monarch's attention; and the valour and ability which she displayed in carrying into practice the measures she advised, not less than her beauty, made, in the sequel, so powerful an impression on his heart, that he attempted by negotiation to obtain the lady from her husband. Finding these means ineffectual, he succeeded in his object by menace; upon which Menon, in a fit of rage and despair, put an end to his life, and Semiramis became the consort of Ninus.

By this lady the Assyrian ruler had a son named Ninyas, who succeeded his mother on the throne. For himself, he did not live long to enjoy his triumphs; and his death has by some subsequent writers been attributed to the treachery of the woman whom he had, at the expense of faith and honour, raised to a throne. It is said that, having secured the good-will of the nobles, she induced the king

to invest her with the sovereignty over his dominions for five days, and that the first use she made of this power was to put himself to death. Other authors, who follow Ctesias, are silent regarding the manner of his demise, which is supposed to have taken place at Nineveh in a natural manner, after his return from the conquest of Bactria, and at the close of a reign of fifty-two years. At all events, sufficient honours were paid to his remains by the widow, for she erected in his capital a tumulus of the most gigantic proportions.

Secure on the throne, Semiramis now thought only of eclipsing the glory of her husband; and her first act was to build the city of Babylon, the same, we are told, of which the ruins still excite the astonishment of travellers, and the magnificence of which, according to the account preserved from Ctesias, is calculated to excite doubt even more than amazement. Nor were her splendid works confined to the metropolis. The banks of the Euphrates and Tigris were embellished with towns; and the commerce of her empire was improved by various judicious measures, as were its agricultural resources by the canals which she caused to be formed.

Having completed her operations in Mesopotamia, Semiramis assembled a vast army, and marching into Media, left there also magnificent monuments of her power and taste, and where, during the completion of these works, according to some authors, she abandoned herself for a long time to a course of the most profligate vice and luxury. But, arousing from this disgraceful sloth, she visited the whole of her Asiatic dominions, and passing thence through Egypt, added the greater part of Libya to her wide territories. From thence she marched to reduce Ethiopia, and, having settled affairs in that quarter, she again entered Asia, and reposed for a while at Bactra.

But tranquillity had no charms for this restless conqueror. The wealth and prosperity of distant India excited her ambition; she longed to view its wonders, to possess its riches, and therefore she resolved to invade it. Three years were consumed in preparing an armament suited to this great enterprise; and the force with which she at last left Bactra is by Ctesias set down at the incredible multitude of 3,000,000 foot, 200,000 horse, 100,000 armed chariots, 100,000 camelmen, besides artificers. To these were

added 2000 vessels for navigating the Indus, carried to the banks of the river on camels, together with the hides of 300,000 black oxen, made into artificial elephants, formed for the purpose of familiarizing her cavalry with the sight of these animals, as well as to terrify the Indians and encourage her own troops by a show of the counterfeit quadrupeds.

The preparations made by Stabrobates, the sovereign of India, for repelling this alarming invasion, were such as became a powerful prince, jealous of his independence, and indignant at an unprovoked aggression. It is asserted that he gathered together a far greater army than Semiramis commanded, and, adding contumely to defiance, upbraided his enemy with her infamous mode of life, and threatened, should his arms be successful, to put her to a cruel death. She smiled at his threats, and advanced to the Indus. "He does not know me yet," said she; "he will soon have an opportunity of judging me by my actions and deportment." But the height of her fortune and the limit of her empire had now been reached. A temporary success rendered her bold; and, decoyed across the river, over which she constructed a bridge of boats, she came to a decisive action with the Indian king. Her artificial elephants could not withstand the shock of the true ones; and, being wounded in a combat hand to hand with Stabrobates, she was forced to recross the stream. The bridge was destroyed in order to check pursuit; but, though many of the Indians perished in the struggle, a multitude of her own troops also were destroyed, and the Assyrian queen retreated to Bactra with scarcely a third part of her army.

This was the last of her enterprises. Her own son, desiring to anticipate the prediction of an oracle, which declared "that she should, at a certain period, disappear from the eyes of men," sent a eunuch to assassinate her. She forgave him the attempt, surrendered herself into his hands, and was translated from earth, as was asserted, in the form of a dove, a flock of which birds had settled at the moment upon her palace.

Such, after a glorious and successful reign of forty-two years, and a life of sixty-two, was the end of the celebrated Semiramis; and the description of her actions alone has been held by many as clearly decisive as to the defect

of the historian's claim to credit. It is not alone the incredible numbers of her army and vast preparations that cast over the narrative an air of fable, for this may be found in other authors, both Greek and Mohammedan, in relating facts which themselves rest on indisputable evidence. We may instance the enormous armaments attributed to Darius and Xerxes in their invasions of Greece, and the incredible multitudes of human beings said to have been slaughtered by Zinghis Khan. In the sack and destruction of five cities alone, Merve, Nishapore, Herat, Rhé, and Bagdad, the number of persons put to death, according to the historians of Zinghis, exceeds eight millions! But to attribute to distant countries like India such an advanced state of power, riches, and civilization, at a period little more than a thousand years after the Flood—and not only to call into existence such prodigious armies, but imagine they could be maintained in remote quarters of the globe, when the race of men were as yet but thinly scattered over any part of its surface—argues not only a strong disposition to romance, but a deficiency of all authentic records.

Ninyas, the son of Semiramis, was ill qualified to maintain the mighty fabric of empire which his parents had reared. Little, in truth, remained for him to do; for all Asia, with the exception of India, acknowledged his supremacy, and few were the adventurers in those early times hardy enough to dispute his power. Unmoved by any necessity for exertion, he abandoned himself to voluptuous enjoyment. Concealing himself from the eyes of his subjects, as if he were something more than mortal, he spent his time in lascivious sloth among his concubines and eunuchs. Yet it would appear that he did not altogether neglect the affairs of state; for we hear that, in order to preserve tranquillity throughout his dominions, it was his practice to levy an army every year, enrolling a certain number of men from each province, who, at the end of that period, were each bound by an oath of fidelity, and dismissed to their homes. The rapid changes involved in this system were considered to afford security against any serious conspiracy on the part either of officers or soldiers.

Of the long list of his successors, little or nothing has been recorded by Ctesias, or at least by his transcribers, beyond their names, and that they pursued a line of policy

similar to that of their progenitor. And here, again, there does appear a most conclusive objection to the authenticity of this portion of the narrative. That, at any period of the world, a term of 1200 years should have been occupied in one empire by a single family, in an unbroken line of con secutive sovereigns, whose reigns all extended to so unusual a length, is a fact unparalleled in history, and opposed to the course of human affairs: and that this long period should, moreover, have been so unproductive of great events as not to afford a single prominent occurrence to give the means of fixing a date, is a circumstance so entirely at variance with all probability, as to render the whole recital totally unworthy of credit.

The last of this long race of sovereigns, Thonos Concolerus of Ctesias, the Sardanapalus of Diodorus, Justin, and Polyhistor, has left a name almost unequalled for effeminate luxury and depraved sensuality. It is asserted that he had become so lost to a sense of decency, that not only did he clothe himself like a woman, but painted his face, and, assuming the ornaments and air of the most worthless of the sex, sat and spun among his concubines. The boldness and resolution, however, with which he is represented to have roused himself and defended his kingdom, when attacked by the rebel Medes and Babylonians under Arbaces and Belesis, is so inconsistent with the character attributed to him, that it has been brought forward as one among other reasons for concluding that there were more than one king of the race named or entitled Sardanapalus;* and that two of them—one an effeminate, the other a brave prince—have, in the accounts of Ctesias and his followers, been confounded together. But this is one of many conjectures to which the obscurity of this period of history has given rise, when the false light of fable was beginning to fade before the gleams of truth from more authentic sources.

It is at the termination of this monarch's reign and life that Ctesias has placed the destruction of Nineveh; but this obviously must be a mistake; for, according to the most approved chronology, the downfall of Thonos Con-

* St. Martin and others suppose this to have been a title borne by the kings of Assyria (derived, no doubt, from the appellations of their gods), rather than a name peculiar to any one sovereign, as there appear to have been more than one who bore it

colerus took place about the year B.C. 821.* Yet, twenty years afterward, following the same notation, we find the prophet Jonah sent to preach repentance to the Ninevites, in "that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle;"† and that their unnamed king, and all his people, received the divine warning with reverence, humbling themselves before the Lord in sackcloth and ashes. The most probable solution of this difficulty is, that Ctesias and his followers have somehow confounded together the taking of Nineveh by Arbaces and Belesis and the death of Sardanapalus, when the former prince established the Medo-Assyrian dynasty upon the throne of Nineveh, with the final capture and demolition of the city, and overthrow of the empire by Cyaxares the Mede, in the year B.C. 606.

The account of this first taking of Nineveh, and the death of the last sovereign of the line of Ninus, is shortly as follows. Sardanapalus, living in despicable effeminacy, became odious to his subjects, and more especially to a valiant noble named Arbaces, and Belesis, a priest and astrologer. These two conspired for the overthrow of their unworthy sovereign, the latter assuring his confederate that, by the rules of his art, he could foresee that he was to dethrone Sardanapalus, and become lord of his dominions. The former, on his part, promised that, should they succeed in their enterprise, he would bestow the government of Babylon upon him.

The conspirators raised their friends, and, gaining over many of the king's troops, attacked the royal army, but were defeated in three pitched battles. Belesis, however, relying on his astrological revelations, persevered; and, re-enforced by the revolted troops of Bactria, surprised the army of Sardanapalus at a splendid festival, and routed them with immense slaughter. The king fled to Nineveh, where, having laid up immense magazines, and trusting to the response of an oracle, which declared that the great city would never be taken until the river had become her enemy, he abandoned himself in fatal security to the indulgence of sloth, while the enemy blockaded his walls.

He was at length roused from his delusion; for, after

* Dr. Russell's Connexion, vol. ii., c. 1. † Jonah, iv., 11

two years, the river, swollen to an extraordinary size by an unusual fall of rain, overflowed its banks, and swept away no less than twenty stadia, or about two miles and a half, of the fortifications. Sardanapalus saw that, the oracle being fulfilled, his hour was come; and he prepared to meet it in a characteristic manner. Retiring to his palace, he caused a vast pile of wood to be raised in one of the courts, having a chamber constructed within. On it he heaped all his gold and silver plate and rich apparel, and entering with his eunuchs and concubines, set fire to the pile, whereby he destroyed himself and them together.

Thus far have we followed Ctesias, whom we now relinquish for other guides. Of the credit due to the earlier parts of his work, we have already expressed a distinct opinion. That there may be some foundation for a portion of his list of kings, it would be idle to dispute or deny, and that the later periods of his narrative afford more frequent and decided glimpses of truth, may also be safely admitted. But, cut off as we are from all reference to the original, and restricted to the works of copyists, who may not always have abstained from alterations, it seems impossible to admit the statements within the pale of authentic history.

We shall now shortly examine the history of the Assyrian or Medo-Assyrian dynasty, according to the canon of Scripture and of Ptolemy, which have a remarkable coincidence, arranged principally from the Universal History, and the authorities followed by its compilers.

With its exception of the slight mention of Asshur as the founder of Nineveh in the book of Genesis, the first ruler of that city noticed in the Old Testament is the personage to whom Jonah was sent, unless we should admit "*Chushan-rishathaim*, king of Mesopotamia,"* who held the children of Israel in bondage eight years, to be an Assyrian sovereign. And of that nameless monarch visited by the prophet, nothing more is known than what we read in the Bible; but it has been conjectured that he was the same as Arbaces the Mede.

The next mention in the inspired writings† of an Assyrian king is that of Pul, who was contemporary with Menahem, king of Israel, B.C. 771, perhaps the Mandau-

* Judges, iii., 8. † 2 Kings, xv., 19.

ces of Ctesias, and successor to Arbaces. The only fact recorded of this prince is that he invaded Syria, and received from the court of Samaria 1000 talents of silver as the price for forbearance and future protection.

Pul appears to have been succeeded by Tiglath-pileser, B.C. 747, probably his son, and perhaps the Sosarmus or Artycas of Ctesias, who, in the year B.C. 740, overran the dominions of Israel, and carried away many of the inhabitants captive.* He pursued the same system towards his other conquests in that quarter; for we find in the same sacred text,† that, instigated by the King of Judah, he marched against Damascus, slew Rezin its king, and, transporting his people to Kir in Media, put an end to his sovereignty.

Shalmaneser, the Enemessar of Tobit, succeeded Tiglath-pileser, B.C. 726. Provoked by the rebellion of Hoshea, king of Israel, who had been reduced to the condition of his tributary, and who had solicited the assistance of So, king of Egypt, to enable him to throw off the Assyrian yoke, he overran the country with a powerful army, laid siege to Samaria, which, at the end of three years, he took, and, carrying all the people into captivity, brought to a termination the independent existence of the ten tribes. He then proceeded against the cities of Sidon, Acre, Palætyrus, and others, which, revolting from the Tyrians, opened their gates; but he failed, after a struggle of five years, to gain possession of Tyre itself.

Sennacherib, possibly the Arbianes of Ctesias, makes his first appearance in Sacred Writ in the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, B.C. 714, marching against the dominions of that prince, who had withheld the stipulated tribute. On this occasion, the Assyrian monarch not only compelled him to acknowledge his supremacy, and promise an annual payment of thirty talents of gold and 300 of silver, but, unsatisfied with these concessions, and with the treasure which the other was forced to strip from the house of God, he sent his generals, Tartan, Rabsaris, and Rab-shakeh, with a mighty host, to reduce Jerusalem itself. These men declared their master's will, taunted Hezekiah with his weakness, and warned him not to put his trust either in the power of Egypt or in

* 2 Kings, xv., 29. 2 Chron., xxviii. † 2 Kings, xvi., 9.

the arm of Jehovah; for that the one was a broken reed, that would pierce the hand of him who should lean thereon; and as for the other, "Know ye not," said they, in the name of their master, "what I and my fathers have done unto all the people of other lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands any ways able to deliver their lands out of mine hand, ... that your God should be able to deliver *you* out of *mine* hand?"* Therefore did he summon the people to submit, that they might be taken to a land abounding with corn and oil, where they might live and not die.

It was on this memorable occasion that Hezekiah called upon the name of the Lord. And the arm of the Almighty was stretched forth; and, of the multitude of armed Assyrians that followed their king to battle, 185,000 men were in one night smitten dead. The rest, terror-struck, fled with their baffled monarch, and returned with speed to Nineveh, where, soured by disappointments, he became so cruel and tyrannical as to exhaust the endurance even of his own family, and was at length put to death by his two sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer, while performing his devotions in the temple of Nisroch his god.†

The decline of the Assyrian power may be dated from the reign of this prince. His father's losses before Tyre, and his own in Judea, with his subsequent misrule and death, were probably the exciting causes of a second revolt of the Medes, who were desirous to throw off the yoke. And though Esarhaddon (according to Ptolemy, Asaradin; to Tobit, Sarchedon;‡ to Isaiah, Sargon§), third son of the murdered monarch, in B.C. 710, and his successor, exerted himself to maintain the integrity of the empire, he was unable to reduce the rebels to subjection, who soon after were formed into a separate monarchy under their first king, Dejoces, B.C. 704.

These events have led some to regard Esarhaddon as the warlike Sardanapalus who resisted the efforts of his rebellious subjects with so much fortitude.‖ That he was an equitable¶ as well as a courageous prince, seems probable,

* 2 Chron., xxxii., 13–15.
† Tobit, i., 21. 2 Kings, xix., 37. 2 Chron., xxxii., 21.
‡ Tobit, i., 21. § Isaiah, xx., 1.
‖ Ancient Universal History, vol. iv., p. 327, 329.
¶ Ezra, iv., 10, calls him the great and noble Asnapper.

and his reverses in the north were counterbalanced by successes in the southwest; for he reduced Babylon—whose king, Evil Merodach, had revolted from the Assyrian sway and then advanced into Syria, to recover the ground lost by his father. He took from the kingdom of Israel the few remaining subjects left by his ancestors, thus expunging it from the list of nations; and reducing that of Judah to utter dependance, carried its king Manasseh in chains to Babylon.* From thence he pursued his victorious career into Egypt and Ethiopia, making a multitude of captives,† and returned, having, in a great degree, revived the splendour of the Assyrian monarchy.

Chronologists‡ have introduced a king between Esarhaddon and Saosducheus, under the name of Ninus III.; who does not appear in Scripture, and whose reign is said to have commenced in the very year when the Saosducheus of Ptolemy's canon took possession of the throne of Nineveh and Babylon, viz., B.C. 667.

At all events, he was succeeded by Saosducheus, of whom little is related, except that he reigned twenty years, and was followed by his son Chyniladan, B.C. 647.

This prince is supposed by the authors of the Universal History§ to be the Nabuchodonosor of the book of Judith, an active and warlike sovereign, who, alarmed at the encroachments of the Medes, raised a great army, and on the plain of Ragau (Rhages) utterly defeated Arphaxad (or Phraortes), the Median monarch, putting him to death in the neighbouring mountains, whither he had fled after the battle. Returning to Nineveh, which even then, according to the book of Judith, and also to Herodotus, was in its power and glory, he feasted his army a hundred and twenty days;‖ after which he sent Holofernes to punish those vassals who had resisted his authority, and refused the aid he required in his late campaigns. His general's expedition was fortunate for a season. Such as did not fall or flee before him submitted to the will of his master, until he proceeded against the Jews, and invested Bethulia, a hill-fortress, encamping in a valley near the place, "spreading themselves in breadth over Dothaim even to Belmaim, and

* 2 Chron., xxxiii., 11. † Isaiah, xx., 4.

‡ Blair, Hales, and others. Dr. Russell follows them.

§ We refer to the fourth volume of this valuable work, p. 328, for the grounds on which this opinion is supported.

‖ Judith, i., 16.

in length from Bethulia unto Cyamon, which is over against Esdraelon."* There he fell, as is well known, a victim to his own inordinate passions, by the hand of the Jewish heroine Judith, who had devoted herself to destroy him in order to save her country;† and the Assyrians, panic-struck at the loss of their leader, fled to their own country, pursued with great slaughter by the enemies they had despised.

It seems not improbable that, in the successful warfare of Nabuchodonosor with the Medes, the great feast held after it, and the dispersion and slaughter of the Assyrians themselves subsequently to the death of Holofernes, we may discover the events which have been confounded by Ctesias, and form his conclusion to the reign of Thonos Concolerus.

Of Chyniladan we hear no more, but that he was succeeded by a king called by Polyhistor, Sarac—probably the Sardanapalus of Justin and other modern authors—in 636 B.C.; but, less able or less fortunate than his predecessor, he lost all that had been wrested from the Medes, and his power was reduced so low that Nabopolassar, the governor of Babylon, to whom he had committed the command of his forces in that country, thought it a fit occasion to throw off the Assyrian yoke. Entering into an alliance with Cyaxares the Mede, he assisted that prince in his attack upon Sarac, and the city of Nineveh was invested by the combined troops. This unfortunate ruler, whose mind had been enfeebled by misfortune, dreading to fall into the hands of his enemies, put an end to his life by burning the palace in which his wealth and family were bestowed in the manner related by Ctesias in reference to Concolerus. But some confusion of dates appears here, by which it seems doubtful whether this event was not suspended at least twenty-eight years; for at this period the Scythians overran Central Asia, against whom the combined Median and Babylonian force found full employment for their arms. In the mean time, Nabopolassar died, leaving the kingdom to his son, the celebrated Nebuchadnezzar (or Nabuchodonosor), who completed the destruction of the Assyrian pow-

* Judith, vii., 3.

† The authors of the Universal History advert to the probability of the story of Judith being fictitious. The point need not be discussed here; we refer our readers, if curious on the subject, to that book, vol. iv., p. 173, and to Prideaux.

er about 606 B.C. The great city of Nineveh, levelled to the ground by Cyaxares, no longer lifted her head among nations. In process of time, indeed, other towns rose from amid its ruins, and flourished, and decayed, and were forgotten; but even at the present day the site of that great and mighty capital may be traced upon the banks of the Tigris.

The empire itself, however, was now no more; the word of God had gone forth against it, and its power was withered, its glory passed away. "Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long, because of the multitude of waters when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir-trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut-trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches; so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height, I have delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness. And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him; upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him. Upon his ruin shall all the fowls of the heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches: to the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their

height, neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water: for they are all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit,"* &c.

CHAPTER III.

Rise and Fall of the Babylonian Empire.

The only authentic Record contained in Holy Writ.—Ptolemy's Canon affords the only true Chronology.—Nabonassar.—Merodach Baladan. — Esarhaddon, the warlike King of Assyria. — Nabopolassar. — His Power.—Nabocolassar or Nebuchadnezzar.—Aids in the Destruction of Nineveh.—Overruns Syria, and carries the Jews into Captivity.—Humbles Pharaoh.—His Dreams.—Divine Predictions.—His Humiliation—Repentance—And Death.—Evil Merodach.—The Belshazzar of Daniel.—Murdered by Neriglissar, who probably is identical with Darius the Mede.—He seizes the Throne—And is slain in Battle.—Laborosoarchod.—Nabonadius.—Nitocris.—Her Acts and Improvements.—Babylon attacked by Cyrus.—Taken by turning the Euphrates.—Fulfilment of the Prophecies.—Gradual Decay of Babylon.—Its Destruction by Darius—By Xerxes.—Seleucia.—Accounts of its Desolation by various Authors.

It is now requisite to turn back nearly a century and a half, that we may discover the establishment of the contemporary kingdom of Babylon, the history of which is so intimately connected with that of Assyria that it is impossible to disunite them.

It has been already observed, that the only authentic notice of what is generally supposed to have been the origin of the ancient Babylonian power—the first monarchy of the postdiluvian world—is contained in three verses of the 10th chapter of Genesis; that the lists of Chaldean and Arabian kings given by Syncellus, Polyhistor, and Moses of Chorene, are entitled to no credit, because they rest not on any authentic ground; and that there is no mention of any ruler of Babylon before Merodach Baladan, who, B.C. 710, wrote to Hezekiah.† Prior to this time, however,

* Ezekiel, xxxi., 3–14.

† There is, it is true, mention made in Gen., iv., 1, 2, of Amraphel, king of Shinar, who warred with the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Abraham.

commences the canon of Ptolemy, the most valuable of uninspired records; and had the chronology of the previous period been certain, and the date of the first revolt of the Medes and Babylonians from the Assyrians under Arbaces and Belesis been accurately fixed, we might have expected to find the commencement of the Babylonian kingdom placed in the year B.C. 821, contemporary with that of the Medo-Assyrian, and Belesis named as the first sovereign. But historians have wisely preferred the accounts of Ptolemy, confirmed by occasional notices in Sacred Writ, to the less certain authority of other profane writers; and he appears to have discovered no king prior to Nabonassar.* It has been established by astronomical calculations that this monarch's reign began on Wednesday, the 26th of February, B.C. 747, in the twenty-third year after the appearance of Pul on the west of the Euphrates. This shows the kingdom to have been of Assyrian origin, and accords with what is stated by the prophet Isaiah:† "Behold the land of the Chaldeans: this people was not, till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness: they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces thereof."

It is uncertain who this prince was; but, as he was contemporary with Tiglath-pileser, some have supposed that he may have been his brother, a son of Pul, king of Assyria. This, it is acknowledged, is entirely conjectural; and that he was tributary or subservient to Tiglath-pileser appears more certain. Indeed, the authors of the Universal History are inclined to think that the Semiramis of the Greeks, if she ever did exist as queen of Babylon, must have been the wife of this prince, and that, as her husband commenced the city, she must have exerted herself after his death in beautifying it, from whence she obtained the reputation of being its founder. For the arguments by which this hypothesis is supported, we must refer to the work itself.

Of the three monarchs who, according to the canon, next succeed, nothing is recorded; and Mardoch Empades, the Merodach Baladan of Scripture,‡ fifth on the list, is only

* It has been already observed, that Nabonassar, desirous of being thought the first monarch of the dynasty, destroyed all the records of Babylon that had been preserved in the temple or archives.

† Chap. xxiii., 13.

‡ 2 Kings, xx., 12. Isaiah, xxxix., 1. He is called the son of Baladan.

remarkable as having held communication with the kings of Judah. He sent a special messenger to Hezekiah to congratulate him on his recovery from illness. The next who claims notice is Asaradin, the Esarhaddon of Scripture, who, we have seen, acquired fame as the warlike Sardanapalus of Assyria, and who possibly, on the race of Nabonassar becoming extinct or rebellious, B.C. 680, took possession of the sovereignty. It was he who utterly swept away the people of Israel, and carried Manasseh, king of Judah, with him in chains to Babylon. Of his successors, Saosducheus and Chyniladan, we have already spoken, as masters at once of Assyria and Babylon.

The most brilliant period of the Babylonian history now approached. Nabopolassar, having broken the power, if not destroyed the city of Nineveh, removed the seat of empire to his capital. During the time when the forces of these allies were employed in repelling the Scythian invasion, Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, attempted to recover his former possessions in Syria; and, in his way to besiege the city of Carchemish, overthrew the King of Judah, who lost his life in the encounter.* Nabopolassar was succeeded by his son Nobocolassar (or Nebuchadnezzar), who, after driving out the Syrians, co-operated with Cyaxares in destroying Nineveh. Having resolved to punish other invaders, he marched at the head of a powerful army against the Egyptians, who had formed an alliance with the revolted tribes on the western bank of the Euphrates. In this enterprise he was not only successful, but on his return entered Judea, took Jerusalem, rifled the temple, and made the king a prisoner. The humble submission of the fallen Jehoiakim, and the promise of a yearly tribute, saved him from the fate of the other captives, who were sent in chains to Babylon. Pursuing his victorious career, he humbled Pharaoh; and, after making himself master of the whole country between the Nile and the Euphrates, he returned to Babylon, loaded with spoil and encumbered with captives, when he began to enlarge and embellish the seat of his growing empire.

In this he eminently succeeded, though he himself lived to experience the lowest degree of human degradation as well as of grandeur. His history is familiar to every

* 2 Chron., xxxv., 20–24.

reader of Scripture. The revelation which he had in the second year of his reign* was the commencement of a series of Divine intimations which accompanied his career, and were not more remarkable in themselves than for the manner of their fulfilment. The dream in question troubled Nebuchadnezzar the more, because in the morning "the thing had gone from him;" and although, with the unreasonable caprice of a despotic prince, he threatened the Chaldeans, the magicians, and the wise men with death, unless they should interpret his vision, he could give them no aid whatever in describing its tenour or its nature.

The tyrannical mandate had already gone forth, and the soothsayers of Babylon trembled under the upraised sword of their executioners, when they were saved by the faith and courage of Daniel, a young Hebrew, who, with three companions, had, by the command of the king, been educated in the Magian sciences, and whose life was thus involved in the general sentence of destruction. Remonstrating with the captain of the guard, who was intrusted with the execution of the royal decree, he boldly pledged himself to declare the interpretation to his majesty, and, together with his associates, prayed "to the God of heaven concerning this secret, and it was revealed unto Daniel in a night vision." And he returned thanks to the Lord, and blessed his name, and made known to the monarch both his dream and its interpretation.

Nebuchadnezzar proceeded in his appointed course, each step of which was the subject of a prophetic annunciation. The unfortunate people of Judah, already heavily visited, fell under his displeasure; for Jehoiakim, having, in spite of the warnings of the faithful Jeremiah,† thrown off his allegiance, lost his life miserably, while his son Jehoiachin, who went out with his mother from the city to humble themselves to the conqueror, were made captives. The metropolis was plundered, the temple spoiled, and the inhabitants carried away in such numbers that scarcely were there enough left to cultivate the ground; while the victor, on his return, placed Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, on the tributary throne.

In like manner were the successes of this tyrant against

* Daniel, ii. † Chap. xxii., xxvi.

the Elamites or Persians, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Tyrians and others, made the subject of prophetic announcement, and Jeremiah* sent tokens of the impending wrath to the ambassadors of all the devoted powers. Encouraged by Pharaoh Hophra, the people of western Syria renounced their allegiance; but the King of Babylon, an instrument, no doubt, of vengeance in the hand of the Almighty, overthrew first the monarch in whom they had confided, and then, turning his arms against Jerusalem, he destroyed its walls, burned it with fire, and, putting out the eyes of the ill-advised Zedekiah, carried him in chains to the Eastern capital.

The predictions† against Tyre and Egypt still remained to be accomplished. A thirteen years' siege of the first at length gave to the conqueror possession of an empty city, for the inhabitants had retired to a neighbouring island with their effects, though his army, meanwhile, was successfully employed in reducing to obedience the Sidonians, the Ammonites, and the Edomites.

But the plunder of Egypt compensated for his disappointment at Tyre; and, having laid waste that land, "from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia,"‡ he returned to his capital.

With the gold amassed in these various expeditions, and especially with the spoils of the Temple of Jerusalem, it is supposed he erected the colossal statue in honour of his god Bel, which he placed in the plain of Dura, and commanded his subjects, of whatever nation or faith, to fall down and worship it. The beautiful story of the three Hebrew youths, who, refusing to comply with this tyrannical and unholy mandate, were in consequence cast into the fiery furnace, is well known to every reader of the sacred annals.

But the hour of retribution and reverse drew nigh; for scarcely had he returned from this splendid career of victory, when his mind was again disturbed by a singular and ominous dream, which seemed to prefigure events so awful as to shake for a moment even the intrepid soul of the prophet who was called upon to interpret it. "Daniel was astonied for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him."§

* Chap. xxvii.
† Ezekiel, xxvi., xxvii., xxviii
‡ Ibid., xxix., 10.
§ Daniel, iv., 19.

But, recovering his equanimity, he lifted up his voice, and boldly declared the will of the Most High, the terrible sentence which drove the haughty monarch to herd with the beasts of the field. Nor was the fulfilment of this dreadful denunciation long deferred, although it appears that the humbling effect of its announcement had been but transitory. Only one year afterward, we find the devoted ruler walking in the front of his palace, contemplating the mighty works of which he had been the author, with a heart, not filled with gratitude and veneration towards the Giver of all good, for the unmerited prosperity which he had bestowed upon him, but swelling with pride and arrogance; saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" But, "while the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee: and they shall drive thee from among men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar; and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like bird's claws. And at the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and, for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me: and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom; and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, and extol, and honour the King of heav-

en, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."*

Never was there so overwhelming a check given to human pride; never a more impressive warning held forth to the impious and the vain; nor can language express a more affecting acknowledgment of error, or a deeper and more grateful piety, than breathes in the concluding words of the royal penitent's narrative. We envy not the feelings of the man who should attempt to weaken the force of such a lesson by seeking to explain, upon natural causes, events which arose out of a direct interposition of divine power.

During the period of the monarch's humiliation, the reins of government were held by his son, Evil Merodach, whose bad administration was severely punished by his father upon his return to reason. But the aged sovereign survived this act of justice only one year; and the manner of his death, on which sacred history has been silent, has by profane writers been described as attended with preternatural circumstances. A spirit of prophecy is said to have come upon him as his hour approached; and, ascending to the top of his palace, he foretold the destruction of his kingdom by the Medes and Persians, praying at the same time that he might not live to witness the event. While yet speaking, it is added that he, like Semiramis, was snatched away from the view of men, and was no more seen upon earth.

Evil Merodach, called Ilvarodam in Ptolemy's canon, and usually considered the Belshazzar of Daniel, who speaks of him as the son of Nebuchadnezzar,† now released from the dungeon into which the just displeasure of his father had cast him, commenced his reign by an act of mercy. He took from the prison, where he had languished thirty-seven years, Jehoiachin, king of Judah, and treated him ever afterward as a sovereign.‡ But, while acting as regent during the visitation inflicted on his parent, he had the imprudence to provoke the anger of Astyages, king of Media, by plundering a part of his country during a great hunting-match which he held on the occasion of his marriage with Nitocris, a Median lady; and an armed body being sent out to punish the aggressors, the Prince

* Daniel, iv., 30-37. † Ibid., v., 2. ‡ Jeremiah, lii., 31.

of Babylon was routed, and pursued with great slaughter to his capital. In this battle the great Cyrus, though only sixteen years of age, first distinguished himself.* This act of folly appears to have been the origin of those forebodings of evil uttered by the father, and which appear to have thoroughly subdued the spirit of the son, who, retiring into his palace, abandoned himself to sloth two whole years, after which he was murdered by Neriglissar, the husband of his sister, supposed to be a Mede, who headed a conspiracy of the nobles.

In this account of the end of Evil Merodach, supposing him to be identical with the Belshazzar of Daniel, of which there seems little room to doubt, there is a remarkable coincidence between the narrative given by the prophet and that of profane authors. Berosus, an annalist, it is true, deserving of no great credit in his accounts of very remote periods, but who is entitled to more belief as the events he describes approach nearer to his own time, relates that he was killed at a banquet by some of his lords. Daniel writes that, on the occasion when the miraculous writing on the wall appeared, Belshazzar made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and commanded the golden and silver vessels, *which his father Nebuchadnezzar* had taken out of the temple of Jerusalem, to be brought, that the king and his princes, his wives and concubines, might drink therefrom. "In that night," says the prophet, emphatically, "*was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain.* And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old."†

This statement, it is obvious, can refer to nothing more than the death of Belshazzar himself, which, according to Ptolemy's canon, occurred in the year B.C. 553, seventeen years before the final destruction of Babylon, and not to the latter event, of which there is no distinct record in Holy Scripture. The Darius here mentioned, and who must not be confounded with Cyrus, is supposed, with sufficient probability, to be Neriglissar the Mede, and chief conspirator, who seized the kingdom. That this conqueror continued to reign in Babylon after his accession to the throne, appears from the sixth chapter of Daniel, where he is represented as setting over his kingdom 120 princes, of whom

* Cyropædia of Xenophon. † Daniel, v., 30, 31

the prophet himself was made the first; while Cyrus is spoken of in the 10th chapter distinctly as *King of Persia.* That the sovereignty of Babylon existed independently of that of the Medes and Persians for a space after the death of Belshazzar, is therefore as clearly proved from Scripture as from the canon of Ptolemy and other profane writers. Indeed, the concurrence of known dates renders this obvious and apparent; but, for farther information upon this perplexing subject, we must again refer to the authors of the Universal History.*

Neriglissar, or Darius, is represented to have been a wise and prudent prince; but the power of the Medes and Persians was so greatly on the increase, that he was forced to solicit aid from his allies to enable him to resist them. The accounts of this period are chiefly gathered from the works of Berosus and the Cyropædia of Xenophon, which last describes both the war and its issue. After an attempt at mediation on the part of the sovereign of India, who sent ambassadors for the purpose of proffering his good offices, the armies met, and a general engagement ensued, in which Neriglissar was slain, and his army utterly dispersed.

But the day on which Babylon was doomed to fall had not yet arrived. What use the conquerors made of their victory does not appear; but we find that the throne was next occupied by a youth, son of the late monarch, who by Berosus is called Laborosoarchod, and Labassoarasc by Abydenus.† In this respect they both differ from Ptolemy's canon, where no such name intervenes between Neriglissar and the last king, Nabonadius. Perhaps it was in consequence of his very brief reign of only nine months that he has been omitted. He evinced a most vicious and cruel disposition, which is probably the cause which led to his assassination by Nabonadius.

The prince just named, the Labynetus of Herodotus, is understood to have been the son of Evil Merodach and of the celebrated Nitocris, who naturally enough was moved with indignation at seeing his country falling into ruin, and his people oppressed by the worthless heir of a usurper, who had excluded him from the throne. Yet, to preserve, even for a season, his hereditary power, recovered by such

* Ancient Universal History, vol. iv., p. 422–426.
† Ibid, vol. iv., p. 418.

olent means, was a painful struggle. The resources of the kingdom, though still sufficient to check the progress of certain invaders, had been greatly impaired by misrule, and were still in a declining state, while probably Nabonadius was not qualified, either by talents or disposition, to restore their efficiency. It appears, indeed, that his reign of seventeen years derived its chief lustre from the acts of his mother Nitocris, who exerted herself not only to embellish the city and improve the surrounding country, but to fortify it so as to resist the storm which she foresaw would come from the east. Many of her hydraulic operations were calculated to extend cultivation and increase the resources of the state; but she also added to the works of the capital, constructing walls along the river-banks, to prevent an enemy from gaining access in that way. Herodotus also ascribes to her the building of the bridge, which till her time had been wanting at Babylon. Of her death there is no particular mention, but it probably was the forerunner of the defeat of her son and the fall of the monarchy.

Cyrus, having at length not only established himself firmly on the throne of Persia, but reduced a great part of Asia to obedience, once more directed his arms against Babylon. Nabonadius attempted to oppose the great warrior in the field, but was beaten back into the city, and immediately placed under a close blockade. The immense strength and perfect state of the fortifications, not less than the condition of the magazines, which contained supplies sufficient for twenty years' consumption, inspiring the citizens with confidence, they gave themselves up to unbounded luxury and enjoyment. This unwise security suggested to Cyrus the means of their overthrow. Herodotus and Xenophon both relate that, after he had passed full two years before Babylon, and had even begun to despair of success, the incautious blindness of the inhabitants induced him to attempt a bold stratagem. On the night of an annual festival, which they were wont to spend in drinking and jollity, he cut the bank of a canal which communicated with a great lake that had been formed to receive the superabundant waters of the Euphrates at the period of its flood. The river poured its contents into that reservoir, which was of capacity sufficient to receive them for a time; and, placing strong bodies of troops at the

points where the stream entered and quitted the city, which was divided by it into two parts, he commanded them, so soon as it should become shallow enough to admit of being forded, to enter by its channel. In the disorder of the night, the gates leading from each street to the bank had been left unclosed and unguarded. The Persians advanced unopposed; and the several parties, meeting at the palace, seized and put to death the king, on which the surviving inhabitants submitted to the conqueror.

Such was the termination of the Babylonian empire; and thus was commenced the fulfilment of that series of prophetic denunciations pronounced by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel. It is interesting to trace how closely the circumstances that are related of this event by profane historians correspond with and illustrate the narrative of Sacred Writ. Great obscurity, no doubt, still hangs over this interesting period; and chronologists are as much perplexed by the conflicting dates deduced from various computations, as the historians have been puzzled by the numerous discrepancies that appear, both in regard to names and persons, in the records of different authors. But on this one important point there is no material dispute, namely, that the kingdom of Babylon, including the empire of Assyria, was finally subverted by Cyrus the Great, about the year 536 before the Christian era. It is equally manifest that these powerful sovereignties never afterward recovered a separate or independent existence, but passed as subordinate provinces to each succeeding conqueror that arose in the East. Alexander, indeed, entertained views of restoring the city to its ancient glory, and making it the metropolis of his immense dominions; but death prevented the accomplishment of his intentions. His successor, Seleucus, established a capital on the banks of the Tigris, but it endured only for a season, and is now, like the other, deserted and desolate. The followers of Mohammed also founded an empire, of which Mesopotamia and Assyria formed a portion; but, for their chief town, they avoided the proscribed site of Babylon, and built Bagdad on the Tigris. Yet even their more recent power has passed away like that of their predecessors: the structures they erected have ceased to exist, and the modern inhabitants can scarcely point out where the palace of the caliphs once stood. "Babylon, the glory

of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency," is indeed "as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: .... wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces. . . . . How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!"*

It may, however, be interesting to trace with somewhat more distinctness the gradual decay of this magnificent city, after its first capture by Cyrus the Great. Leniently dealt with by that conqueror, who appears to have made it the seat of his government seven months in the year, the inhabitants recovered in a great measure from the effects of the calamity which had stricken their nation, and lived happily under the protection of their new master. But his son Cambyses, a dissolute and cruel prince, having loaded them with heavy taxes, and removed the royal residence entirely to Susa, they took advantage of the troubles consequent on his death, and attempted to throw off the Persian yoke. This called down upon them the vengeance of Darius, his successor, who marched with a powerful army to reduce them to obedience.

Besieged within their walls, the Babylonians had recourse to a very cruel expedient, in order to economize the consumption of their stores. Each man selected from his women the wife he was most attached to, and a single maid-servant; and all the rest of his family, old men and children, fathers, mothers, sisters, and infants, were without distinction strangled. Thus relieved from the fear of want, they not only held the city, but completely baffled every stratagem put in practice by Darius to throw them off their guard. The disgrace of ultimate failure on his part was prevented by the extraordinary self-devotion of one of his chief officers. This man, named Zopyrus, having mutilated himself by cutting off his nose and ears, and mangling his body by stripes, fled to the Babylonians, feigning that he had been thus used by his master for advising him to raise the siege, and had come to them burning for revenge.

* Isaiah, xiii., 19–22; xiv., 12.

Falling into the snare, they at once received and employed him. Some considerable successes over the Persian troops, which Darius connived at to cover the deceit, induced the inhabitants to intrust Zopyrus with a still more important charge, till at length the guard of the city ports was confided to his care. On the next assault, the Cissian and Belidian gates were opened by him to the Persians, who thus, through the wiles of a pretended deserter, became a second time masters of Babylon. Resolved to provide against the chance of future rebellion, Darius crucified three thousand of the principal citizens, and beat down the walls, it is said, from the height of 200 cubits to fifty, which, if we admit the correctness of the former dimensions, may account for the difference on this head between the measurement given by Herodotus and that of Strabo. But he provided for the repopulation of Babylon by sending them 50,000 women to replace those they had murdered; and, to cherish a spirit of loyalty, gave them Zopyrus for their governor.

His son Xerxes was still more cruel and less scrupulous; for we learn from Arrian that, after his return from Greece, he destroyed the temple of Belus and other places consecrated to the national worship, and carried off the great golden image of which Herodotus was told by the Chaldeans.

But it is not easy to reconcile the destruction of the walls by Darius, and of the temple by Xerxes, with the description which the former historian gives as an eyewitness of its condition in his own day, for he speaks of it as it existed at that time, and not merely as it had formerly been. As we hear of no farther violence being inflicted on the city till the time of Alexander, it must appear not a little singular, that then, which was but one century afterward, the temple of Belus should again have become so much dilapidated that the work of ten thousand men should be required for two months merely to remove the fallen ruins. By that time, however, the city also had suffered greatly from its misfortunes; and though we learn, as has just been stated, that the intention of the conqueror was to restore the fane of the national god, and make Babylon his chief residence, his death put a stop to all the measures which he contemplated for carrying his purpose into effect. His successor, Seleucus Nicator, by building

Seleucia on the Tigris, and transferring thither the seat of government, dealt to the waning glories of Babylon a still more deadly blow, the moral effects of which were, no doubt, accelerated by the removal of materials to the modern capital, which is said to have vied in splendour with the more ancient one. Pausanias, indeed, informs us that Seleucus compelled the inhabitants to settle in the new city, and that the walls of Babylon and the temple of Belus had then almost ceased to exist, though there were still a few Chaldeans who continued to dwell around the consecrated edifice. Pliny remarks that the old metropolis, swallowed up by the other, had become quite a wilderness.

From this time we hear little of the condition or fortunes of the great city. A Parthian general is said, about the year B.C. 127, to have destroyed what remained of the public buildings, overturned the temples, and carried off many families to Media, where they were sold as slaves. In the reign of Augustus, as Diodorus informs us, there was but a very small portion of it inhabited. Strabo, who wrote in the reign of the Emperor Tiberius, but who probably never himself visited Mesopotamia, observes that "at the present time Seleucia is actually a much more considerable city than Babylon, which is to a great degree deserted, and to which may be applied, without any hesitation, the words of the comic poet, 'The great city is a great desert.'"

A persecution of the Jews, who had taken refuge in Babylon, in the reign of Caligula, rendered her desolation yet more complete, insomuch that little mention is made in the expeditions of Trajan and Severus of the metropolis once so great; and Lucian of Samosata, who flourished in the time of Marcus Aurelius, speaks of it as formerly remarkable for its vast circumference and numerous dependancies, but which would soon disappear as Nineveh had done.

Saint Jerome, who resided in the East more than thirty years, about the beginning of the fourth century, speaks of Babylon as a preserve of game for the Persian kings; and Theodoret, bishop of Cyprus, who died about A.D. 458, says that the city was no longer inhabited either by Assyrians or Chaldeans, but only by some scattered Jews. He adds, that the Euphrates had changed its course, and no longer passed through the town except by means of a small canal.

From this time the city is no more mentioned but as a

collection of shapeless ruins in a howling wilderness, the haunt of venomous creatures and beasts of prey; and so complete is the annihilation of all which might tell of the past, that tradition and science are equally unable to discover, among the heaps of dust and potsherds which attract the traveller's eye, even the site of the celebrated temple of Belus, or the gigantic walls of Babylon.

CHAPTER IV.

Origin, Government, Religion, Laws and Customs, &c., of the Ancient Assyrians and Babylonians.

Sources of Information.—Origin of the Assyrians.—Government.—Religion.—Gods of the Assyrians.—Customs and Laws same as those of the Babylonians.—Government of the Babylonians.—Names of their Monarchs, and Derivation.—Their Habits.—Officers and Functionaries.—Establishment and Titles.—Laws.—Little known regarding them.—Sale of Virgins.—Punishments.—Religion.—Chaldeans.—Opinions regarding their Origin.—Regarded as a nomad Race by Heeren and Gesenius.—Faber's Theory of the Progress of their Religion—And of the Dispersion of Mankind after the Flood.—Of the Cuthim or Cushim.—Remarks on Faber's Theory.—Mr. Beke's Theory.—Supported by Coincidence of ancient and modern Names.—Bochart.—Difficulties of the Subject.—The Chaldeans the dominant People in ancient Babylon.—Origin and Progress of their Religion.—Chaldean Cosmogony and Doctrines according to Berosus.—Its Similarity with the Scriptural Account of the Noachian Deluge.—Mythology.—Pul or Belus.—Nebo, Rach, Nego, Merodach, &c.—Grossness and Depravity of their Ceremonies.—Manners and Customs of the Babylonians.—Learning.—Science.—Astronomy and Astrology.—Mathematics.—Music.—Poetry.—Skill in working Metals and Gems.—Manufactures.—Commerce.

Origin.—It will now be proper to place before our readers the little that is known of the origin, government, religion, laws, and customs of the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians. The sources of information on these subjects are much the same as those from whence the general history is derived, and are neither less limited nor imperfect. From Scripture we know that Assyria was occupied by Asshur and his descendants, to whom, no doubt, it owes its name. We have the same authority for believing that a portion, at least, of Mesopotamia was possessed by

Nimrod and his progeny; and an attempt has been made to prove that another section became the abode of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, and his posterity.*

Government.—Of the nature of the Assyrian government we know nothing more than may be gathered from the Bible; that it was an hereditary monarchy, and quite despotic. We are equally in the dark respecting the laws by which it was governed. It is probable they were few and simple, depending chiefly, in their application, on the will of the prince, partaking, in a great degree, of the nature of patriarchal rules, though sometimes harshly enforced by arbitrary power.

Religion.—This, there is no doubt, was a polytheistical idolatry; for there is sufficient proof that the nation had various idols. In Scripture, for example, we hear of Sennacherib being slain by his sons while worshipping in the temple of his god. In all probability, the deities and forms of adoration among the Assyrians were nearly the same as those of their neighbours, and particularly the Babylonians, a circumstance which will afterward be more particularly noticed. It may, therefore, be sufficient at present to name such of their divinities as were peculiar to them, of which Nisroch was one. Adrammelech and Anammelech, both mentioned in the Old Testament, appear to have been other names for Moloch, which itself signifies Lord, or supreme power; and they were revered under various representations, as that of a mule, a peacock, a pheasant, or a quail.

Derceto, the reputed mother of Semiramis, though of Mesopotamian origin, was recognised at Ascalon. The Greeks attributed to her several other names; and, like their own Venus, she was represented as half woman, half fish. Hence the Assyrians are said to have had a superstitious reverence for the finny tribes; a feeling which they extended to pigeons, from their having been the nurses of their great queen, who disappeared from the eyes of mankind in the shape of a dove. In fact, it appears that, like other nations of antiquity, they deified all their deceased sovereigns who had in any degree distinguished themselves.

The customs, arts, and trade of Assyria, having, so far as is known, been similar to those of Babylon, require no

* Origines Biblicæ; or, Researches in Primeval History. By Charles Tilstone Beke; 8vo, Lond., 1834, vol. i., p. 106.

separate notice; we shall therefore proceed at once to the consideration of these particulars in relation to the latter people.

Government of the Babylonians.—This, like that of all other Eastern states, was essentially despotic, gradually degenerating from the pure patriarchal form into the sway of an absolute monarch. Everything centred in the person of the sovereign; all decrees were issued by him; and, claiming a supernatural character, he even demanded divine worship. The names of the kings, accordingly, were derived from those of their gods, or of former rulers who were confounded with them; and, on a similar principle, they affected strict retirement from the vulgar eye, and seldom appeared in public.

Haughty and arrogant as they were, these autocrats were nevertheless obliged to have frequent communion with their nobles, with whom we find them occasionally feasting, and from whom were selected the chief officers who administered the government of the country. Of the duties of some of these functionaries we are incidentally informed by various authors; and it appears that the judges were divided into three sections, and chosen from the gravest personages of the empire. On the first class devolved the regulation of marriage, and the punishment of all crimes which violated its sacred obligations; the second took cognizance of robberies and thefts; and the third decided in all civil affairs. We find also, from the book of Daniel, that Nebuchadnezzar deputed his authority to princes, governors, captains, judges, treasurers, counsellors, and sheriffs, whose duty it was to maintain good order in all departments of the imperial service. Again, from the same source, we gather that the great king had a household corresponding in the extent of its establishment to his mighty state, including the captain of his guard, the prince of his eunuchs, the supreme judge, and the chief of the magicians, who were always in attendance. The first of these was the minister of his justice; the second had charge of the interior of the royal dwelling, and the education of the youth who were brought up within the palace; the third sat at the king's gate, that is, in an adjoining apartment, to hear complaints and to pass judgment; the last attended near his person, to interpret all omens and dreams, fix fortunate periods, and to satisfy the monarch's mind with

regard to everything that related to prognostication. All these were chosen on account of their personal qualities, as well as the excellence of their mental endowments. He was saluted with the Oriental form of "O king! live forever!" which resembles nearly the mode of address adopted at the present day towards the great sovereigns of Asia, whose courts, in respect of attendance and magnificence, bear a close resemblance to those of the Assyrian and Mesopotamian empires.

Of their laws nothing in detail appears to be known, except that strange and revolting arrangement, particularly described by Herodotus and Strabo, whereby it was provided that, instead of parents disposing of their own daughters in marriage, all young women should be brought to a public place appointed for the purpose, and put up for sale, one by one, to the highest bidder. The money thus obtained for the most beautiful was employed in obtaining husbands for those left without an offer, and who were disposed of in the same manner, with a premium proportioned to their want of personal attraction. But the historian informs us also that the whole business was conducted with the strictest attention to decorum, being always under the superintendence of the officers appointed for this duty, respectable by their age and rank, and who, before the bargain was concluded, received security from each purchaser that he would marry the object of his choice.

We have no information respecting their punishments, farther than that they appear to have been inflicted according to the will or caprice of the reigning monarch. This we see exemplified in the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and in that of the prophet himself, when, through the intrigue of his enemies, he was cast into the den of lions.

The administration of their various religious rites was committed to the Chaldeans, who composed the hierarchy of the country, and engrossed the whole of their boasted learning. They were not only the priests, but formed the scientific body of the nation, pretending to the gift of prophecy, a knowledge of augury and divination, and the power, by means of enchantment, of influencing the destinies of men. By these means they acquired a most dangerous influence over their superstitious countrymen; but who these Chaldeans originally were, is a problem

that has never yet been satisfactorily solved, although frequently made the subject of much learned discussion. Even the stock from which they sprung, and the land where they first acquired power, are matters still involved in darkness. From the profane writers of antiquity we gain little knowledge on the subject; and although they are frequently mentioned in Scripture, the notices are isolated, and sometimes obscure. Thus far it is certain that they were a distinct nation as far back as the days of Terah, the father of Abraham, who lived "in Ur of the Chaldees;" and it may be inferred, from a statement in the book of Job,* that they were a predatory race. Yet the prophet Isaiah, it might be thought, must have had some other people in his view when he said,† "Behold the land of the Chaldeans: this people *was not*, till the Assyrian founded it for them that *dwell in the wilderness*." Could this have been applied to a tribe who lived in Mesopotamia in the days of Terah and Abraham?

Heeren,‡ following Gesenius in his disquisition on this very text, is disposed to seek for the original Chaldeans in the mountains of Kurdistan, or still farther to the north, and suggests that the name may have been applied by the Semitic nations to the more barbarous tribes of upper Asia, as that of *Turani* afterward was, by the inhabitants of Iran or Persia, to the Tartars. He regards them as a nomad race, who, about the year B.C. 630, descending from the mountains of Taurus and Caucasus, overwhelmed southern Asia, and, entering the Mesopotamian plains, first as mercenaries, at length started forth as conquerors, and made themselves masters of the rich provinces of Babylonia and Syria. This, however, appears to be a mere conjecture, founded on insufficient grounds, and inconsistent with the declaration of Scripture as to the existence of the Chaldeans in Mesopotamia at a much earlier period.

Mr. Faber, who has treated the question fully in his ingenious work upon Pagan Idolatry, regards the Chaldeans as a branch of the descendants of Cush, the son of Ham; and his theory is so curious that we shall attempt a very slight sketch of it, in order to give the reader an idea of

* Chap. i., 17. † Chap. xxiii., 13.

‡ Historical Researches, 3 vols. 8vo, Oxford, 1833, vol. ii., p. 147, and note.

the various speculations to which this dark subject has given rise.

This learned author supposes that the descendants of Noah did not quit the land of Armenia at an early period after the Flood, but that the patriarch lived and died in the vicinity of the spot whence he issued from the Ark. No sooner did his personal influence cease to be felt, than divisions took place among his progeny, which disposed the different families or clans to a separation. Nimrod, a man of an ambitious spirit and powerful mind, being surrounded by his kindred, who regarded him with devotion, naturally controlled the councils of the whole body, who, passive and disunited, easily submitted to his sway. To restrain the turbulent, laws soon became necessary, as well as officers to administer and an armed police to enforce them. These statutes were framed, of course, by the great leader, whose family constituted the magistrates, and from whose tribe were chosen the conservators of the peace; who, thus armed, and formed into a disciplined band, became the first military establishment—an irresistible engine in the hands of the mighty hunter.

But the religion professed by these early inhabitants of the earth—a devotion to the will of the one almighty Creator—was unfavourable to the project of absolute dominion entertained by Nimrod; for the command of God had gone forth that they were to separate, and replenish the earth with human beings: a consummation which the ambitious chief sought to prevent. To effect his purpose, a change of worship was necessary, and that, accordingly, became his next object. To administer this new religion a priesthood was indispensable, selected from his own military caste, whose interests were identified with those of the tribe, and in whom alone their ruler could trust. Such an institution would, of course, be reverenced and upheld by soldiers proud of their privileges, who, at the same time, would naturally regard their holy brethren as their best coadjutors in obtaining and preserving their own power.

Such was Nimrod, the leader of the Noachites, and on such a basis was his power constituted, when, according to our author, he led the unbroken nation of mankind, about 559 years after the Flood, from the country of Armenia into the plains of Shinar, and about 54 years later commenced the tower and city of Babel. This undertaking, a short

time afterward, was brought to an abrupt conclusion by divine interposition; whence followed the ordained dispersion of mankind.

The moral effect of so severe a blow upon such a proud nation would, it is supposed, appear in dividing them into many portions, each of whom would seek their own fortune where chance might lead, some containing individuals of all classes and castes, others composed entirely of priests and military; which last would carry with them a high notion of their former privileges, and claim for themselves the peculiar honours due to a race of unpolluted nobility.

This tribe or clan, of which Nimrod was the chief, and, in fact, the king, is designated by Mr. Faber the *Cushim* or *Cuthim*, as being the descendants of Cush, the son of Ham; and they are regarded by him as fulfilling a very exalted destiny, and sustaining a most remarkable part in the history of mankind. It is imagined by many that Ham and his race became accursed on account of the sin against his father Noah; but this exposition of the well-known passage in the 9th chapter of Genesis is rejected by the author just named, who, for reasons which he sets forth, conceives the curse to be limited to Canaan, while he confers the sceptre of the world on the warlike posterity of Cush, notwithstanding that reading of the Sacred Volume which blesses both Shem and Japheth, and gives to them Canaan as their servant.

He also maintains that the first postdiluvian empire, that of the Cuthites, commenced with the institution of an idolatrous religion at Babel. After this, he admits, Scripture is silent on the future fate of the family; but he nevertheless asserts that there is no quarter of the world where the name and the race are not to be found. He conceives that, while many of them emigrated to different quarters of the earth, Nimrod, with the portion who adhered to him, founded Babel, and three subordinate towns; and that he afterward *went forth* to Nineveh, where he discovered the family and descendants of Asshur already settled. These he drove out, and built a city after his own name, while his former capital, now abandoned, sunk for a time into a merely provincial town. Meanwhile, the dispersed Cuthites took their way in various directions, settling at first principally in the mountainous tract which stretches from

the head of the Ganges by the south of the Caspian Sea to the northeast of the Euxine, including all that lofty region called by the natives "the stony girdle of the earth," from whence they overran most parts of the world. Thus in Africa they occupied the whole country from the Thebais to the source of the Nile and Mountains of the Moon, as well as the land of Egypt, which was subjugated by a tribe of pastoral Cushim from Upper India and Ethiopia. In Asia their rule stretched from the banks of the Indus to the Mediterranean Sea; while, migrating northward, they covered Touran (Tartary) with an unmixed race, under the name of Scuths or Scyths. These were the Celto-Scuths of the West, and the Indo-Scuths of the East. In short, "this enterprising people, who, by a singular fate, have ever been, at different periods, the corrupters and the reformers, the disturbers and the civilizers of the world, were known by various names, either general to the whole, or particular to certain divisions. They were called Scuths, Chusas, Chasas, Cisseans, Cosseans, Coths, Ghauts, and Goths, from their great ancestor *Cush;* whose name they pronounced Cusha, Chusa, Ghoda, Chasa, Chasya, or Cassius. They were styled Palli, Bali, Bhils, Philistim, Palistim, Bolgs, or Belgæ, from their occupation; for the term denotes *shepherds.* And they were partially denominated Phanakim or Phœnicians, and Huc-Sos or Shepherd-kings, from their claiming to be a royal race; Sacas, Sagas, Sacasenas, Sachim, Suchim, Saxe, or Saxons, from their god Saca or Sacya; Budins or Wudins, from their god Buddha or Woden; Teuts or Teutons, from their god Teut or Taut; and Germans or Sarmans, from their god Saman or Sarman, and his ministers the Samaneans, or Sarmaneans, or Germaneans, as they are indifferently called, according to a varied pronunciation of the same word."*

The Chaldeans, then, according to Mr. Faber, were those descendants of Cush who, under Nimrod, built Nineveh, and founded what has been called the Assyrian empire, but really the Cuthic; and the first Chaldean dynasty he supposes to coincide with that of the seven monarchs mentioned by Eusebius and Syncellus—and which lasted 224 years, or, according to Alexander Polyhistor, only 190—and with the Mahabadians of the Iranians. To these he

* The Origin of Pagan Idolatry. By George Stanley Faber, B.D.; 3 vols. 4to, Lond., 1816, vol. i., p. 85, 86.

adds the list of kings given by Ctesias, which, commencing with Ninus, terminates with Thonos Concolerus; and from this results a line of sovereigns of the Cuthic lineage, extending through a space of 1495 years from Nimrod. These positions he endeavours to establish at great length and with much ingenuity; dwelling particularly on a passage of Justin, quoted from Trogus Pompeius, which mentions a Scythian race of kings, who, prior to the era of Ninus, coming from the north, and extending their sway even to Egypt, were the dominant power for some time in India. These, he contends, were the imperial Cuthim, for they must have been Nimrodic monarchs: and thus, says he, "we may be morally sure that the descent of the Scythians from the Armenian Caucasus, previous to their acquiring the sovereignty of Asia, really means, however it may be disguised, *the descent of the Cushim, at the head of the subjugated Noachidæ, from Mount Ararat into the Babylonian plain of Shinar*, and that the national appellation of Scythians or Scuthim is the selfsame word, pronounced only with a sibilant prefix, as Cuthim or Cushim."*

We have enlarged on this author's views, because he enjoys a high reputation for learning, and his work, however open to criticism in some points, assuredly displays much research as well as talent. But, though we do not mean to enter the lists with him, we cannot avoid observing, that his account of the origin of the Chaldees appears not to coincide with the facts narrated in Scripture, nor with the probable condition of the world in those early ages.

In the first place, the Noachidæ, whether subjected or not by a section of their number, and whether remaining in Armenia or existing in the plains of Shinar at the period in question, comprehended at all events the whole of the human race.† There could not, therefore, be any other of the sons of men whom they might subdue on their descent, either in Egypt, or in any part of Asia; indeed, none of the countries could have received their names, as the several families of the Noachidæ, from whom they derived their respective appellations, had not yet dispersed to seek their several abodes.

In the second place, it seems scarcely possible to identi-

* Origin of Pagan Idolatry, vol. iii., p. 402. † Gen., xi., 1–9.

fy the Chaldees of Ur, in the days of Terah and Abraham, with the Cushim of Ninus, who in Sacred Writ are always designated as Assyrians, and whose descendants, if Mr. Faber's hypothesis be just, must about that time have been in great glory, and enjoying the power won for them by the victorious Semiramis. In fact, it seems difficult to conceive that a monarchy, so extensive as that of Assyria is represented to have been, could have existed contemporaneously with so many petty sovereigns in its vicinity; and the presence of any great power in that quarter must appear extremely doubtful when we read of Abraham rescuing Lot and defeating the King of Elam with only 318 men of his household.

Mr. Beke propounds a theory totally different from that now stated. Ur of the Chaldees he supposes to have been peopled by the descendants of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, who, according to the system laid down in his work, settled in the northwestern parts of Mesopotamia, and, as their numbers increased, extended themselves southward and eastward along the valley of the Hermas, from Nineveh to the territory of Shinar, which latter he conceives, upon grounds to which we may hereafter have occasion to advert, not to have been in Babylonia, but near the foot of Mount Masius. These Arphaxadites or Casdim he conceives to have been the ancient Chaldeans; considering the latter term as an abbreviation of the Hebrew patronymic Arphacasdim, that is, the children or descendants of Arphaxad.*

This reasoning receives some corroboration from the fact that many places in that neighbourhood retain the appellations they bore in ancient times, and which they probably received from their first settlers. Thus Haran,† which still exists in the vicinity of Ur, received its name, no doubt, from the brother of Abraham; and Serug, in the same country, was most probably the dwelling-place of the grandson of Peleg. Nineveh is not the only spot which preserves the name of Nimrod. Babel remains unchanged; and Mosul even at this day is known to its Christian inhabitants as the city of Atur: a fact which is implied in the title-page of the Syro-Chaldean Bibles, found in every church.

* Origines Biblicæ, vol. i., p. 107.

† Mr. Beke, however, does not admit this to have been the Haran of Abraham's brother.

Nor need this immutability of name be regarded with surprise, when we reflect that the Syrian, Chaldaic, Hebrew, and Arabic are all cognate tongues, which have not, as in other lands, been superseded, or even greatly corrupted, by the more barbarous dialects of the strangers who from time to time have overrun the district. The unchanging Arabic is still the general language of all those regions, while Jews and Christians use, with little variation, the forms of speech that were common in the days of the captivity. This is a state of things singularly favourable for etymological discoveries and the advancement of comparative geography; and though the application of the one science to the other may occasionally be carried too far, there is, in the present case, strong grounds of probability, at least, for the derivation of the term Casdim and the location of the Chaldees in Ur.

In both these points, it is true, Mr. Beke is opposed by high authority. The learned Bochart ridicules Josephus and others when they maintain that the Chaldeans were formerly called Arphaxadites, and insists that they derive their name from Chased or Chesed, the son of Nahor, brother of Abraham, who was their progenitor, and from whom, in the ancient Scripture, they are always called Chasdim. In confirmation of this he quotes Hieronymus, who says that "Chased also is the fourth from whom the Chasdim, that is, the Chaldeans, were afterward called;" from whence, too, Ur Chasdim, that is, Ur of the Chaldees, is always described as the region or city in which he dwelt. He confesses, indeed, that Chased was not born at the time when we read that Abraham went forth from Ur of the Chaldees, but that the city was so called by anticipation; a figure, he says, common in Scripture, as the one from which that celebrated people *were* to spring. Arphaxad, he adds, appears to have given his name to that part of Assyria called by Ptolemy Arrapachitis.*

Enough has now been stated to show the difficulties of this subject, which would be perplexed rather than elucidated by the recital of farther conjectures. But, notwithstanding this obscurity, there is no doubt that the Chaldeans, as the dominant people in ancient Babylon, possessed

* Bocharti Geographia Sacra, editio quarta, folio, Lugd. Bat., 1707, lib. ii., cap. iv., p. 74.

all power and learning, as well as the influence which belonged to the priesthood. Whether their idolatry commenced with the era of the dispersion or not, it probably arose in the manner common to all such superstitions. The Almighty, invisible to mortal eye, was worshipped through the medium of his most glorious works; and thence sprung Sabaism, the adoration of the heavenly host.

To this simple and pure veneration another element was soon added. The souls of those kings who had greatly distinguished themselves on earth were regarded after their death as protecting spirits, who continued to watch over their people and families upon earth. From heroes they were transformed to demigods, and at length each was identified with some one of the heavenly host. The founder of their race, or he who was regarded as such, was represented by the sun; and a female influence, naturally provided as his consort, took her place in the mythological character as the moon. The other chief personages received various names and titles, suiting their several characters, but all might be resolved into the one original idea.

The Chaldeans, according to Berosus,* taught that there were kings who ruled at Babylon before the Deluge, the amount of whose reigns were 120 sari, or 432,000 years, each saros being a period of 3600. The last of these was Xisuthrus, at the termination of whose reign of eighteen sari came the Deluge. In the time of the third of these antediluvian monarchs appeared Oannes Annedotus, an amphibious creature, half man, half fish, who ascended by day from the Erythrean Sea, and instructed the assembled multitudes of mankind. He taught that there was a time when all things were darkness and waters, wherein resided monsters of various sorts, with snakes, reptiles, and fishes. Over these presided Omoroca, a female who long reigned in gloomy and solitary independence; but at length Belus came and cut her asunder, and out of one half of her body was formed the earth, while the other half became the heavens, upon which all the monsters were annihilated. This, he said, was an allegory, conveying to them the aqueous origin of the universe; for that Omoroca was the same as *Thalatth*, or the sea, although the word might also mean the moon. Afterward, seeing that the earth

* Ancient Fragments. By Isaac Preston Cory; 2d edit., 8vo, Lond., 1832, p. 30.

wanted living beings, he commanded one of the gods to cut off his head, and the other gods, mixing the blood with earth, formed the human species from the compound. This same Belus, whom men also called Dis, or Pluto, divided the darkness from the light, and separated the earth from the heavens; disposed the world in order, and called forth the starry host.

Oannes also taught the Babylonians the use of letters, and made them acquainted with the principles of architecture, jurisprudence, and geometry; showed them valuable seeds, and was their instructer in all useful arts. Of this merman there were four appearances, one of which was under the name of Odacon.

To Xisuthrus the god Cronus appeared in a vision, and told him that a flood would take place in a particular month, and that he should write a history of all things down to the time, and bury it in the City of the Sun at Sippara.* He was instructed to build a ship, and embark in it with his family, friends, and a pilot, together with animals of all sorts. Having obeyed the mandate, he sailed about the world, floating on the face of the waters until the Deluge abated, when the vessel stranded, as is supposed, among the Gordyæan Mountains, where, like Noah, after sending forth birds, he found that the earth was dry, and, with his wife, and daughter, and the pilot, quitted his asylum. Having then built an altar and sacrificed to the gods, he and his companions disappeared.

Those who remained in the ship now disembarked, and began to lament their lost companions, calling upon the name of Xisuthrus. Him they saw no more; but they heard his voice in the air, admonishing them to pay due regard to religion, and telling them that, on account of his piety, he had been translated to live with the gods, and that his wife, children, and the pilot enjoyed the same honours. He farther told them to make the best of their way to Babylonia, and search at Sippara for the records he had left, and which were to be made known to all mankind.

The similarity of this account to that of the Noachic Deluge must be quite apparent, although the whole is greatly disfigured by its Chaldean dress. At what period idolatry began, we know not, nor when the simplicity of

* The Perisabora of the ancient geographers, and Anbar, the ruins of which are still to be seen close to the castle of Felugia.

the patriarchal system gave way to the fantastic innovations of man; but we learn from Scripture that images were made use of as objects of adoration as early as the days of Terah, the father of Abraham. The period of hero-worship soon followed; and the gods of the Chaldees from henceforth are to be viewed in images and monsters made by the hands of men.

The first of the ancient kings who received the honours of deification was Pul or Bel, Belus, to whom his son, the Tiglath-pileser of Sacred Writ, or Ninus of profane writers, erected an image; and his title to this distinction appears to have been acknowledged throughout Mesopotamia as well as Assyria, for a temple was built to him in Babylon at a very early period, where he was regarded as the tutelary divinity. In this celebrated structure, however, there appear to have been two gods, one of whom was understood to be invisible, while the other was represented by a colossal statue of gold. There were also two altars; on the one, which was of the same precious metal, and of moderate size, only young victims could be offered; on the other, which was larger, none but such as were full grown; hence it would appear that one of these gods was held subordinate to the other.

The next in importance of their deities appears to have been represented by an idol called Succoth-benoth, mentioned in 2 Kings, xvii., 30, and which is said to mean the *tabernacles of the daughters.* Herodotus says that this goddess was by the Babylonians called *Mylitta*, signifying *mother;* and Selden considers the name as the root of the *Venus* of later mythologies, a derivation which is supported by other authorities, and involves but an easy change of orthography.

Another of the Assyrian or Babylonian deities was Nebo or Nabo, whose name so often enters into those of their kings, and who, therefore, may be supposed to have been held in high estimation. He is found in Isaiah (chapter xlvi.) coupled with Bel, and may possibly have been the same with Chemosh or Baal-peor of the Moabites; but little more is known of him than that he is understood to have been much consulted as an oracle.

To these may be added Rach, Nego or Nergal, Merodach, and many others that have not reached our time, who were objects of worship to the capricious Babyloni-

ans, whose city appears to have been the resort of all idols.

The epistle of Jeremy the prophet, appended to the book of Baruch, contains a view of their ceremonies, their temples, and their priests, which gives a very revolting picture of grossness and utter depravity. Not only was immorality encouraged by example, but human victims were sacrificed in order to appease the imaginary deities of a barbarous people. It is supposed, however, that this atrocious violation of all the feelings of humanity, as well as of divine law, was too revolting to be long continued, and that the shedding of human blood was afterward confined to the inhabitants of a particular district, who were called Sepharvites from the name of their city, Sepharvaim, and who offered even their own children in sacrifice. But the practice appears to have been revived at Hierapolis, where all that is abominable in idol-worship seems to have taken refuge after the destruction of Babylon.

With regard to the manners and customs of the Babylonians, the little information we possess is collected from the writings of Herodotus, Strabo, Berosus, Quintus Curtius, and other ancient authors, who quote principally from one another, and who, doubtless, chiefly recorded those things which seemed strange to them, and in which the people of Babylon differed from other nations. But we hear nothing of their employments, their domestic habits, or of those minute observances that make up the greater portion of human life. We learn, indeed, that the people were peculiarly credulous, superstitious, and immoral; that they were gorgeous in their apparel, expensive in their establishments, affecting even a degree of effeminacy in their dress and adornments. Their under garment was of linen, reaching to their heels; over this they wore a vestment of woollen, and above all a white mantle or cloak, often very expensively ornamented. They wore their own long hair, their heads being covered with a tiara or mitre. They anointed their bodies with oil of sesamum, and were particularly lavish of perfumes. Each man carried on his finger a seal-ring,* and in his hand a staff or sceptre, which, by law, was adorned on the head with some badge or figure, as a rose, a lily, an eagle, a beast; and their feet were shod

* Great numbers of these are picked up at this day in the ruins of Babylon and the surrounding country.

with a sort of slipper, such as is observed in the sculptures at Persepolis. It is almost unnecessary to observe that this account applies only to the latter period of the Empire, and not to the earlier times, when their manners must have been more simple, the public mind more energetic, and habits of vice less prevalent.

The whole learning of the nation rested, as we have already said, with the Chaldees, who refer their first instruction in astronomy, geometry, and astrology to that Oannes of whom we have just spoken. Sir Isaac Newton leans to the opinion that this person was an Egyptian, who, not long before the days of David and Solomon, fled into Chaldea, carrying with him the science of his country. This opinion, however, seems rather at variance with the Scripture, where the learning of the latter nation is spoken of as remarkable at a very early age; and the attempt of the first postdiluvians to build the tower of Babel, implies an acquaintance with the principles of architecture which could only belong to an advanced state of the exact sciences. Besides, according to the tradition of Jews, Arabs, and Indians, the Egyptians owed all their knowledge to the Chaldeans, from whose country it was conveyed by Abraham: and, rivals as the two nations were, both in arts and arms, the claim to superior antiquity, at least, did certainly lie in favour of the Mesopotamians.

But, whatever may have been its source, it is manifest that their science in later times was stationary. They departed not from the rules they had been taught; professed neither to know, to require, nor to teach more than they themselves had learned from their ancestors; and their principal merit appears to have consisted in being perfectly acquainted with what they professed to know. In point of fact, their attainments were very trifling, and their notions of astronomy, in particular, were fanciful and absurd. They appear to have considered the earth as a being like a vessel or boat, hollow within, round which the sun, and moon, and stars revolved, but at what relative distances they were totally ignorant; hence they attributed the greater length of time occupied by their respective revolutions only to a greater tardiness of motion. The moon, however, they conceived was an exception to this hypothesis; they taught that she shone with a light not her own, and accounted for her eclipses by her immersion in the shadow

of the earth; but as to the eclipses of the sun they were totally uninformed.

They divided the zodiac into twelve spaces, each being distinguished by a sign, and throughout which the several planets performed their revolutions. These bodies were six in number, enumerated according to their respective shares of influence, as follows: Saturn, the Sun, Mars, Venus, Mercury, and Jupiter; and they were denominated interpreters, as portending by their motions and aspect the will of the gods.

Under the planets they ranged thirty stars, which they called counselling gods; half of whom took cognizance of what was done under the earth, the other half of that which was done by men, or in the heavens; and they taught that once in ten days one of the superior stars descended as a messenger to the inferior, and *vice versâ*, by which a regular correspondence was kept up. Of these deities there were twelve chiefs, one of whom was assigned to each month of the year and section of the zodiac. Out of the inferior stars, again, they selected twenty-four, placing twelve towards the north pole and twelve to the south.

All these luminaries were believed to exercise great power over the fortunes of men; and from their aspects and position with reference to each other, they predicted all of good or evil that should befall the individuals born under their sway. This, it will be observed, was less a system of astronomy than of astrology, to the knowledge of which, indeed, they made the highest pretensions.

As to the world, they taught that it was eternal—without beginning and without end; and they acknowledged a Divine Providence, who directed the motions of the heavens and the course of nature by means of inferior agents or deities. Beyond this, little is known of their doctrines on those lofty subjects.

That the Chaldeans had a considerable acquaintance with mathematics and geometry appears certain, as we have already observed; for, without some knowledge of these sciences, they could not have constructed the buildings and other important works which are attributed to them, and of which the vestiges still remain.

It is likewise manifest that they had musical instruments and performers, as in the book of Daniel we read

of flutes, cornets, harps, sackbuts, psalteries, and dulcimers; but we are ignorant of their real form; and it is not improbable that they bore some resemblance to those used by the rude band now called the *Nokara Khaneh*, which in Persia and other Eastern countries plays at stated times over the gateway of the royal palace.

Of their poetry we know nothing; and their total ignorance of medicine may be estimated from the fact that it was their custom to expose their sick publicly in places where every passer-by might see them, in the hope that some one who had been similarly afflicted might communicate the means of cure.

That they were skilful in the working of metals, and in the cutting of stones and gems, appears not only from the uses they made of these substances in their palaces, temples, and houses, but from the fragments which are, even at this remote period, occasionally found among the ruins of Babylon and other cities of Mesopotamia. They were also celebrated for their manufacture of linen and woollen. The cloaks called *sindones*, usually made of cotton, were highly valued for fineness of texture and brilliancy of colour, insomuch that they were commonly set apart for royal use. Their carpets of finest fabric and most splendid dyes, also their gorgeous drapery and embroideries, were equally famous. The former were in great request in Persia, where every bed and couch were covered with them.

Pliny mentions a suit of Babylonian hangings for a dining-room which cost a sum equal in our money to £6458 6*s.* 8*d.*; and Plutarch, in his life of Cato, tells us that the stern patriot, having received in a legacy a Babylonian cloak or mantle, sold it immediately, as being far too costly for him to wear. This people, too, as well as the Assyrians, were celebrated for their purple dye.

That the commerce of ancient Babylon must have been very great, is unquestionable. The riches and luxury of the country alone afford sufficient proof of this; and assuredly no city of that period could boast of a more advantageous position as a trading entrepôt. Built upon one, and commanding the navigation of two noble streams, both leading to the Persian Gulf, and surrounded by populous districts, nothing was wanting to encourage a spirit of adventure; and that such did exist to a very great ex-

tent we know, though of the exact nature and particulars of the commerce itself we have no detailed account. The natives were fond of magnificence, and full of artificial wants; costly in dress, perfumes, ornaments, and in their general habits of life. Their own country did not produce the articles they consumed in such abundance, and they must therefore have imported them; and as the land around afforded little to give in return, the means of purchasing must have arisen in part from the profits of trade and barter.

It is known, also, that many of the early sovereigns gave great encouragement to merchandise as well as to agriculture. Gerrha, supposed to have been near the site of the modern El Katif, was a commercial station; Teredon, on the Pallacopas, was founded by Nebuchadnezzar; and Semiramis is said to have built towns upon the banks of the Tigris as marts for Media and Persia.

The land-trade of Babylon is divided by Heeren* into five chief branches: that to the east with Persia and Bactria; to the north with Armenia; to the west with Phœnicia and Asia Minor; and, finally, to the south with Arabia.

The great road to the east ran by Ecbatana to the Caspian Gates, through which it led to Hyrcania and Aria, and thence in a northerly direction to Bactra, which last was the entrepôt of Central Asia, Tartary, and the more southern provinces.

The path for western commerce, according to Strabo, passed north through Mesopotamia to Anthemusia on the Euphrates, twenty-five days' journey, where it turned towards the Mediterranean. This line could only be traversed by strong caravans, on account of the Scenite Arabs, who occupied the Desert and plundered all whom they could overpower.

The northern route to Armenia and Asia Minor was the great military communication made by the Median sovereigns, from Susa by Babylon to Sardis. It was divided into 110 stages of five parasangs or about twenty miles each, every one having a splendid caravansera attached to it. Tavernier traced it from Smyrna to Tokat, from whence, in later times, it went to Erivan for the purpose of reaching Ispahan, subsequently the capital of Persia. The

* Historical Researches, vol. ii., p. 203.

great road now leads by Erzeroum to Tabreez and the north of Persia.

But the commerce with Armenia was chiefly maintained by the River Euphrates on rafts of timber bound upon inflated hides, or in rude boats. These were loaded with wine and other produce of the country, and when they reached Babylon were sold, together with the commodities which they conveyed, the force of the stream rendering it impossible for them to return up the river. The owners, however, carefully preserved the skins, which were folded upon asses or mules, and carried back by land. This traffic is described as having been prosecuted to a great extent.

But the main branch of trade was undoubtedly that with India and the countries beyond the Gulf. This was carried on, of course, in ships, many of which, it may be presumed, were the property of Chaldean merchants; for that this people possessed a mercantile navy is not only alluded to in Scripture,* but is rendered certain from many incidental notices preserved to us in the Greek writers. Still there is reason, as Heeren observes, for believing that much of this intercourse was conducted by the Phœnicians, who had settlements on the eastern coast of Arabia, and were the great carriers between India and Babylon.†

The principal objects of this trade were frankincense and drugs, spices, especially Ceylon cinnamon, ivory, ebony, fragrant woods, precious stones, pearls, gum-lac for dye, robes, gold and gold-dust, and Indian dogs, which last were greatly in demand all over Central Asia. One of the satraps of Babylon is said to have devoted the revenue of four towns to their maintenance; and Xerxes carried an immense number along with him when he invaded Greece.

The chief places in the East to which this navigation was directed, were on the western coasts of the Indian peninsula: to Crocola, now Curachee; probably to Barygaza, now Baroach; and to Ceylon.

Heeren speaks of certain ports in the gulf which were places at once of produce and of commerce. Tylos, an island, according to Ptolemy, fifty miles from the Bay of Gerrha, supplied walking-sticks, and timber for ship-build-

* Isaiah, xliii., 14. † Historical Researches, vol. ii., p. 246.

ing,* the Aradus and Daden of the Hebrew poets. Bahrein must then, as now, have supplied abundance of pearls.

The trade to Persia and Bactria afforded to the Babylonians many articles both of luxury and manufacture. Carmania (Kerman) sent its wool; Bactria, lapis-lazuli, emeralds, rubies, and other precious stones; Cabul, onyxes and sardines; Khorasan, turquoises; and, though not mentioned particularly by any author, there is no doubt that the various commodities which form the lading of caravans at this day were then equally objects of commerce. Their saffron, indigo, and assafœtida, with the various gums and drugs, dyes, and manufactures of Upper India, as well as of the countries between it and Persia, were brought in abundance to Babylon, not only for consumption there, but for transit to the coasts of the Mediterranean. Cotton and wool must have been required to a great extent for their manufactures; and even silk, as some suppose, may have found its way from China.

CHAPTER V.

Antiquities.—Babylon.

Greatest Interest of these Countries attaches to the early Periods of their Existence.—Vestiges of former Greatness everywhere abundant.—Ruins of Babylon.—Discussions regarding the Identity of Site of ancient Babel and Babylon.—Denied by Beke, who places the Land of Shinar in Upper Mesopotamia.—Ainsworth's geological Observations.—Tower of Babel.—No Scriptural Authority for supposing that it was destroyed at the time of the Dispersion of Mankind.—Location of the other Cities of Nimrod.—Accad.—Erech.—Calneh.—All Traces of the most ancient Postdiluvian Fabrics probably effaced by subsequent Structures.—Ancient Babylon described.—By what Authors.—Extent.—Height of its Walls according to various Authorities.—Structure.—Streets.—Intersected by the Euphrates.—Bridge.—New Palace and hanging Gardens.—Temple of Belus.—Described by Herodotus.—Golden Statue.—Other gigantic Works.—Canals.—Artificial Lake.—Its Construction attributed to Semiramis, to Nebuchadnezzar, and to Queen Nitocris.—Population.—Space occupied by Buildings.—Scriptural Denunciations against Babylon.

It is obvious, from the slight sketch we have given of the history of the countries under consideration, that the great interest they possess attaches to the early period of

* There is no island of the gulf which now produces any timber.

their existence, when they were the seats of empire, populous and rich, and covered with cities, towns, and villages, of which now, in many cases, not even the names remain. Before, therefore, describing the country in its present decayed condition, it is fit that our attention should be turned to the vestiges of that fallen greatness; the venerable remains of departed prosperity which meet the traveller's eye in every quarter—in the alluvial plains of Babylonia as well as in the rocky mountains of Assyria. In describing the most prominent of these, we shall endeavour, by examining what time has spared, and making use of the imperfect lights which history or tradition presents, to compare, in some degree, the brilliant past with the desolate present, and trace, in the obscure mounds and shattered walls that now encumber the land, the abodes of generations who once were among the wise and mighty of the earth.

Of these vestiges no place affords a more abundant display than Babylonia and Chaldea, the Irak-Arabi of the Mohammedans. Not only are the ruins of the ancient capital, the first and probably the greatest city of the world, to be found within their precincts, together with those of Seleucia, Ctesiphon, Orchoe, and Waasut, but the whole plain is thickly covered with traces of former habitations. Scarcely, indeed, is there a single rood of ground which does not exhibit some fragment of brick, or tile, or glass, or sepulchral urn, to tell that man has lived in a region which now presents to the eye but one vast expanse of arid desert: a howling wilderness, where the only evidence that he still exists is afforded by the black Bedouin tent, or the wandering camel which here and there dots its dreary surface.

Among these numerous vestiges, the mounds of ancient Babylon claim, of course, the first place in interest and importance; and we shall accordingly proceed to consider it as it was and is. But, before attempting a description of this great city, there are some preliminary questions which can scarcely fail to suggest themselves as involving considerations of the highest interest, and which it is therefore proper to examine.

In the first place, are we to consider the ruins which are now very generally admitted to be the remains of the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar, as occupying also the position of

the Tower of Babel, and the first city of the postdiluvians? Do any one of the mounds which now meet the traveller's eye represent the relics of that earliest architectural effort of the human race? Or did the Babel of Nimrod, the capital of the mighty hunter, occupy the same spot as the metropolis of the Chaldæo-Babylonians?

These questions lead directly to another, on the solution of which the replies to them must mainly depend, namely, whether the land of Shinar, mentioned in the book of Genesis, is identical with the Babylonia of more recent times. To the consideration of this point we shall first address ourselves.

Many learned disquisitions have been promulgated upon this subject, and various results embraced by their authors. The opinion most commonly received is that the plains of Babylonia do really represent the land of Shinar. Some writers, however, are disposed to deny this proposition; and among these, Mr. Beke has endeavoured to prove not only that the territory of Babylonia is not identical with the land of Shinar, but that we must look for that land in Upper Mesopotamia; and he is inclined to fix it in the plains about Ur* or Orfa, in the province of Diar-Modzar. But there are better data on which to proceed in examining this question; and Mr. Ainsworth, in his "Researches," has furnished proof, first, that the country indicated by Mr. Beke as answering to the Shinar of the postdiluvians, agrees in no particular with the description of that land in Scripture; and, secondly, that the alluvial formations of Babylonia did not, at the period when the Tower of Babel was built, differ greatly in extent, consistence, or natural appearance from their condition at the present day. In regard to the first point, it may be sufficient to remark, that the whole of Upper Mesopotamia, with the exception of particular and limited spots, consists of gravelly tracts intersected by ranges of hills, in no place affording an expanse of flat country answering to the Scriptural account of Shinar. The only two level tracts of great extent are those which stretch eastward from the Khabour, and south from Sinjar to the Hamrine range of hills; and both of these, so far as is known, are rather of a gravelly than an alluvial character, and in no case far removed from mount-

* See the map annexed to his work.

ains. Now we are especially told in Scripture that the builders of the Tower of Babel used bricks, well burned in the fire, instead of stones, and slime or bitumen for mortar. But in no part of Upper Mesopotamia could there have been occasion for such expedients, the two last-named materials being far less abundant than stone and mortar; whereas, in the alluvial district of Babylonia, the use of brick would become a measure of necessity; and the ever-flowing fountains of Hit, which unquestionably furnished the bituminous cement for the capital of Nebuchadnezzar, were at hand to supply the builders of Babel with the same ingredient.

These considerations may serve, perhaps, to prove that, notwithstanding the tempting lure which the name of Sinjar or Singara holds out to etymologists, the position of that land must be sought for at a lower point in the valley of the Euphrates, if, indeed, the whole country from the Sinjar hills downward to the sea did not, in those early times, pass under the same name. In fact, the geological researches of Mr. Ainsworth supply us with the means of showing that the early postdiluvians could have had no such serious obstacles to contend with in choosing the locality which is generally believed to have been the scene of their daring attempt. We shall not follow him through the elaborate inquiry of which he has given us the result. It goes chiefly to prove that the large beds of breccia and gravel which abound throughout Mesopotamia must have been brought to their present situation by the agency of water, at some period *antecedent* to the Deluge of Scripture: first, because these beds in many places *underlie* formations of a Plutonic character, which must have been produced by physical convulsions, of which there exists no record since that event; secondly, because these gravelly formations extend in the valley of the Euphrates to a distance *below* the site of ancient Babylon, having been discovered at Iskenderia, in the ancient bed of the Pallacopas, and to the west of Semava; and, thirdly, because there is every reason for believing the greater part of the alluvium of Babylonia and Chaldea to have been formed by the Flood, and to have experienced little alteration since the progress of alluvial encroachment upon the waters of the gulf by the washings of the rivers became comparatively slow. Mr. Ainsworth proves that, reckoning from the time when

Babylon attained its high rank as a city, a period of 2600 years, the increase of land by the deposition of alluvium at the head of the gulf, into which the Euphrates, Tigris, and all the rivers of Susiana empty their waters, has not exceeded the rate of thirty yards per annum.

Thus it may be considered as established, both that the Shinar of Scripture, or, at least, the portion of it referred to in the 10th chapter of Genesis, was not in Upper Mesopotamia, and also that it lay farther down the valley of the Euphrates, in an alluvial soil, in the neighbourhood of bituminous springs. A full consideration of all the circumstances detailed will, we think, lead to the conclusion that the Tower of Babel and first city of the postdiluvians must have been founded on some spot not very distant from the ruins of Babylon which are seen at this day. Whether that celebrated structure did actually occupy the exact position of those mounds that now attract the traveller's eye, is a point which, from the scanty information we possess, will never, in all human probability, be decided.

Adopting, however, the reasoning of Mr. Rich, in his first Memoir on the ruins of Babylon, it may be observed that there is no Scriptural authority for supposing that the building was destroyed at the time of the dispersion of mankind, although its farther progress was arrested. We learn that the Babel of Nimrod was certainly placed in the land of Shinar, and there appears nothing unreasonable in the supposition that the city of the dispersed might continue to be the abode of the mighty hunter and of his descendants; while those who, in a later age, undertook to raise a monument to the honour of Belus, may have availed themselves of the labours of their forefathers as a foundation for their own. At the same time, it may be remarked that there are no grounds for even conjecturing to what extent the building had proceeded when stopped by the interposition of the Almighty, or whether it had attained a magnitude calculated to impart an enduring grandeur to its ruins.

Assuming, then, that the Babel of the postdiluvians did actually occupy the same, or nearly the same place as the mounds which represent the Babylon of a subsequent period, a step at least will be gained towards establishing the positions of the other cities of the kingdom of Nimrod, "Erech, and Accad, and Calneh," in the land of Shinar.

Recent researches, both geographical and historical, have induced several learned persons to fix the sites of these ancient cities as follows:

Accad is supposed to be represented by the huge mound of Akkerkoof, above six miles from Bagdad, and the smaller ones by which it is surrounded.

Erech, by the still more imposing remains known by the name of Workha, in Chaldea Proper, below Lemlum.

Calneh is referred to the site of Ctesiphon or Madayn, which cities have, of course, obliterated all vestiges of a prior state.

The proofs on which these conclusions rest are not as yet before the public, and it would exceed the bounds of a work like this to give in detail a chain of evidence and reasoning which, it is to be hoped, will soon appear in a perfect shape. But, with regard to the first, it may be mentioned that, while the remains of ancient embankments, canals, and other buildings, fragments of pottery, glass, and similar substances, no less than the nature of its structure and materials, attest its having, in very remote times, been a place of great importance, the name applied to it by several ancient authors approaches to that of the ancient city of Nimrod. Thus, in the text of the Talmud, it is called *Aggada*, and the learned Hyde quotes from Maimonides the expression "Extat Aggada tres annos natus" in reference to this spot. That the Accad of Scripture should be found in the vicinity of Babel was to be expected; and it is worthy of remark, that the Akkerkoof of the Arabs is by the Turks called Aker-i-Nimrod or Akree-Babel.

The name of Erech appears to be well preserved in the present appellation of Irkah, Irakh, or Workha; while its locality with reference to that of Babel, as now assumed, appears confirmatory of the conjecture that it commemorates the second-mentioned city of Nimrod. Yet it is possible that it may represent only the Orchoe of the Chaldeans instead of Umgeyer or Mugeyer, a ruin hitherto unknown or undescribed, and which by some is conceived to occupy the ground of that city; while, on the other hand, the term Orchoe may be nothing more than a modification of the ancient Erech, and Workha or Irkha a more modern pronunciation of both.

The comparative vicinity of the site of Ctesiphon to

that of ancient Babel may, in like manner, lend plausibility to the conjecture which places the Calneh of Nimrod's kingdom on the ground afterward occupied by the former; and it is farther strengthened by the appellation of Chalonitis, subsequently borne by the whole district, which was the seat of one of the early bishoprics. Yet even in the position of Chalonitis there appears to be a doubt; for Isidore of Charax, himself a native of that quarter, says that Apolloniatis commenced at Seleucia, extending eastward thirty-three shæni or parasangs, the city of Artemita, then called Chalasar, being distant fifteen of these measures from Seleucia, nearly direct east. From thence—that is, from the boundary of Apolloniatis—stretches Chalonitis, twenty-one shæni broad, of which a Greek city, Chala, is the capital, fifteen shæni from Apolloniatis, and 156 miles east of Seleucia. Five shæni east from it is Mount Zagros, the boundary between Chalonitis and the territory of the Medes.*

That any portion of the mounds now seen, or the sites we have described, belong to those earliest cities of the world, which are presumed to have been there erected, it would be more than rash to affirm. On the contrary, it is almost certain that, in the long period of more than 4000 years which have elapsed since Nimrod founded his kingdom in Shinar, every portion of the original fabrics must have mouldered into dust, and that the huge mounds which astonish us in various parts—such as the Birs Nimrod, Akkerkoof, Workha, Mugeyer, Sunkhera, Zibliyeh, Jibel Sanam, and others—belong all to far later, though still very remote ages, and were temples erected at the instance of the Chaldean priesthood, in the days succeeding Bel or Pul, to the honour of their various deities.

From the consideration of these heaps of dust and potsherds, it is now time to turn our eyes for a while to the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar, "the glory of the kingdoms," "the golden city," "the praise of the whole earth," which the arrogant monarch, in the days of his impious pride, declared that he had built by the might of his power and for the honour of his majesty.

But, in order to form some idea of this splendid metrop-

* Two Essays on the Geography of Ancient Asia. By the Rev. John Williams, 8vo, Lond., 1829, p. 58.

olis, we must have recourse to other sources besides Scripture; for, although we find in the Sacred Volume many direct allusions to the great power of the empire, and the magnificence of its capital—its walls, its palaces, its temples, and its idols of massy gold—to give a detailed description of Babylon in its high and palmy state, formed no part of the design contemplated by the inspired writers. We must therefore turn to the pages of Herodotus, Ctesias, Strabo, and Diodorus, where we shall find ample materials.

These authors all describe the city as having been in form a square, each side of which, according to the first of them, extended 120 stadia, or about fifteen miles. But, as the accounts differ greatly in regard to the dimensions and extent of the walls, the following table, taken from Rennell's Geography of Herodotus, will serve to give at a glance the results of the several authorities:

	Circuit of Walls.	Height of Walls.		Breadth of Walls.	
	Stadia.	Cubits.	Feet.	Cubits.	Feet.
Herodotus	480	200	300	50	75
Ctesias	360	*	300	.	.
Pliny	480	.	.	.	.
Clitarchus	365	.	.	.	.
Curtius	368	100	150	.	32
Strabo	385	50	75	.	32

The walls, according to the old historians, were protected from approach by a large wet ditch, the mud from which served to form the bricks that were used in the building. These were cemented together with melted bitumen, and the moat was lined with the same materials. In each side of the square there were twenty-five portals, making 100 in all, which were furnished with gates of brass. On the summit of the wall, between each two of these gateways, were built three towers: there was one at each corner, and three between each corner and the first gate, all of them rising ten feet above the parapet of the wall. In some parts, however, where the line led through a morass, these towers were omitted, as unnecessary for defence, so that there were but 250 in all. Within the walls there was left a space of 200 feet clear of houses, forming a spacious pathway all round. The city was intersected by straight streets, running from each gate on either side to that corresponding opposite, so that the

* Fifty orgya are given; it should probably be fifty cubits.

whole area of it was divided by fifty streets—each fifteen miles long, and crossing each other at right angles—into 676 squares. Around these stood the houses, not contiguous, but with spaces between them, and all three or four stories high, having their fronts ornamented in various ways. The interior of each square was laid out in fields and gardens, so that more than half the space within the walls was occupied by cultivated land.

Babylon was intersected by a branch of the Euphrates, which, running from north to south, divided it into two parts, each of its banks being lined by a breastwork or wall of burned brick, in which were small portals furnished with gates of brass corresponding to each of the streets. These parts were united in the middle of the city by a bridge thirty feet in breadth, and not less than a furlong in length,* and built with much ingenuity. At each end of this bridge, according to some authors, there was a palace, the old and the new; the former, on the east side, occupying four of the square divisions, that is, being three miles and three quarters in circumference; the latter, on the west, covering nine of them, that is, having a circuit of seven and a half miles. The Temple of Belus, which filled a single square, rose near the former. Herodotus mentions but one of these palaces, stating that it stood in an enclosed circular space at one end of the bridge; the Temple of Belus, with its brazen gates, standing in the other. The new palace, according to Diodorus, was a place of vast strength, surrounded by three walls, having considerable vacancies between them, and each, as well as those of the old palace, being embellished with a variety of sculptures.

To this new structure, which, it is pretended by Berosus, was but the work of fifteen days, were attached what have been called the hanging gardens, built by Nebuchadnezzar to gratify his wife Amytis, a Median lady. These occupied a square of four plethra, or 400 feet on each side, and are described as rising in terraces one above another, till they attained the height of the city walls; the ascent to each terrace being by a flight of steps ten feet wide, the pile resting upon a series of arches, tier above tier, and strength-

* Diodorus states that it was five furlongs in length, while, according to Strabo, the Euphrates at Babylon was only one furlong broad. The bridge may, however, have been of such a length as to connect the two portions of the city in the event of a flooding of the river.

ened by a surrounding wall twenty-two feet thick. The floors were formed by a pavement of stones, each sixteen feet long by four broad, over which two courses of brick, cemented together with plaster, were laid in a bed of bitumen; over these were spread thick sheets of lead; and on this solid terrace was placed suitable mould, deep enough to nourish and support the largest trees. On the highest of these terraces was a reservoir, which, being filled by an engine from the river, served to water the plants. Such, according to Diodorus, were the celebrated hanging gardens of Babylon erected by Nebuchadnezzar. The Temple of Belus, which, at all events, was enlarged and embellished by that monarch, is described by Herodotus as two furlongs square, in the midst of which rose a tower of the solid depth and height of one furlong, upon which, resting, as a base, seven other turrets were built in like manner and in regular succession. The ascent, which was on the outside, winding from the ground, was continued to the highest tower, and in the middle of the vast structure there was a convenient resting-place. In the last tower was a large chapel, in which was placed a couch, magnificently adorned, and near it a table of solid gold; but there was no statue. No man was suffered to sleep there; but the apartment was occupied by a female, who, as the Chaldean priests affirmed, was selected by their deity from the whole nation as the object of his pleasures. "They themselves," adds the historian, "have a tradition, which cannot easily obtain credit, that their deity enters this temple, and reposes by night on this couch."

In the temple there was also a small chapel, which contained a figure of Jupiter, in a sitting posture, with a large table before him. These, with the base of the table and the seat of the throne, were all of the purest gold, and were estimated to be worth 800 talents. On the outside of the chapel there were two altars; one was of gold, on which only young animals were sacrificed; the other was of immense size, and appropriated to the sacrifice of those which were full grown. Upon this, too, at the annual festival in honour of their god, the priests are said to have consumed incense to the amount of 1000 talents. In this temple there was formerly a statue of solid gold, twelve cubits high; a fact the historian mentions from information given by the Chaldeans, not from his own knowledge, which would seem

to imply that his other descriptions were drawn from personal observation. Darius, the son of Hystaspes, he adds, endeavoured by sinister means to obtain possession of this statue, not daring openly to take it; but his son Xerxes afterward seized it, putting to death the priest who endeavoured to prevent its removal.

Besides those gigantic works, there were others of less show, but much more important to the prosperity of the capital and its surrounding territory, which were constructed or completed by Nebuchadnezzar, or other sovereigns of the Chaldæo-Babylonian dynasty. Such were the noble system of canals, which are alluded to by Herodotus, and several of which are mentioned by ancient historians—the Nahr Malikah, the Pallacopas, the Nahrawan, and the Dijeil of later times. To these may be added the great artificial lake, the huge embankments, and the subterraneous passage or tunnel under the Euphrates, attributed by Diodorus, on the authority of Ctesias, to the great Semiramis; by Berosus, Abydenus, and others, to Nebuchadnezzar; and by Herodotus to Queen Nitocris, who, we have reason to believe, was the wife of Evil Merodach, although the historian mentions neither the name of her consort nor of her predecessor.

Of these canals Herodotus speaks in terms of approbation, but seems to consider them as formed rather as a means of defence than of agricultural improvement; for he says that, by their disposition, they rendered the Euphrates, which before flowed to the sea in an almost even line, so complicated in its windings, that, in its passage to Babylon, it arrived three times at Ardericca, an Assyrian village, at which all persons wishing to go from the sea to the capital were compelled to touch on three different days. The banks, too, which she raised to restrain the river on each side, were, he says, really wonderful, from their enormous height and substance. The earth used for them was taken from an immense lake which she dug, the circumference of which was not less than 420 furlongs (about forty-two miles), and the banks were strengthened by stones brought from a distance.

One use of this lake, he remarks, was to receive the waters of the Euphrates, which were turned into it, so that, the bed below becoming dry, she was enabled to erect a bridge over the channel; previous to which period, all per-

sons desiring to cross from the one half of the city to the other were forced to make use of boats. To have been available for this purpose, the lake must doubtless have communicated with some of the low marshy tracts to the southward, by which the water made its way to the sea, or was absorbed by the sand; and it may now be represented by some of those very tracts southwest of Babylon, as, however large, it could scarcely have absorbed the river for a time sufficient to admit of the construction of a bridge over so broad a stream. It proved, in the sequel, a fatal work to the city, as it was by a repetition of that very operation that Cyrus gained an entrance, and wrested it and the empire from King Labynetus.

With regard to the population of this great metropolis, and the extent of inhabited ground contained within its walls, a great deal has been written, and various opinions entertained. D'Anville, upon a calculation of what he conceives to be the most probable data, reduces its area to thirty-six square miles; while Rennell, following a similar method, inclines to assume for its extent a square of eight and a half British miles, or seventy-two square miles, observing that even this estimate is far below the one in Herodotus, which would give an area of 126 square miles, or about eight times that of London. It is not, however, to be imagined that the whole of this enclosure was covered with houses; on the contrary, we learn that the interior of every division was occupied by gardens; and Quintus Curtius, particularly, limits the space under building to eighty stadia, adding, "nor do the houses join, perhaps from motives of safety; the remainder of the place is cultivated, that, in the event of a siege, the inhabitants may not be compelled to depend upon supplies from without." What the eighty stadia of Curtius may have meant, it is by no means certain; but this much is sure, that a great limitation was intended of the inhabited space within the walls. It is very well known that most Oriental cities usually contain a large space of garden-ground within their circuit; and when we find Nineveh called a city of three days' journey, we may be sure that this description comprehended a vast extent of orchards, or even fields. Those who desire to see what has been written on this subject by a deservedly esteemed writer, may consult Rennell's Geography of Herodotus, section xiv. It will there be seen that the

learned author is inclined to think that Babylon, in its most flourishing state, may have contained 1,200,000 inhabitants.

Such, then, was the capital of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, until sacked and destroyed by Darius, according to the testimony of Herodotus, who visited the place scarcely a century after its first reduction by Cyrus, and about eighty-seven years after the more severe treatment inflicted on it by his successor. We have now to visit its mouldering remains, after the full accomplishment of the Divine denunciations pronounced against it by the mouth of his prophets: "How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! I will make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction."* "And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant. Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness; a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby."†

* Isaiah, xiv., 12, 23. † Jeremiah, li., 37, 43.

CHAPTER VI.

Ruins of Babylon described.

Allusions to them by ancient Authors.—From A.D. 917 to 1616.—Described by Niebuhr and Beauchamp.—By Olivier.—By Rich.—General Aspect.—Face of the Country.—Principal Mounds described.—Hill of Amran.—El-kasr.—Remarkable Tree.—Embankment.—Mujelibé.—Coffins discovered there.—Birs Nimrod.—Vitrified Masses.—Al Heimar.—Other Ruins.—Buckingham's Account and Opinions of the Mujelibé, El-kasr, &c.—Al Heimar.—The Birs.—Sir Robert Ker Porter.—His Description of the same Ruins.—His Search for farther Ruins on the west Side of the Euphrates.—Difficulty of reconciling the Position of these Ruins with the Accounts of ancient Historians.—Speculations regarding the ancient Walls of Babylon.—Probable Mistakes of Buckingham.—Changes in the Course of the Euphrates.—Conjectures concerning the Birs Nimrod—And the ancient Borsippa.—Discrepancy between ancient Accounts.—Arrian and Berosus.—Cities built from the Ruins of Babylon.—Ainsworth's Suggestion of a Change of Names for the several Ruins.—His Mistakes in regard to Measurements.—The vitrified Masses.—Much Room yet for Investigation respecting these Ruins and the circumjacent Country.—Prospects of this being effected.

The gigantic mounds and mouldering heaps which are now all that remains of this great capital, have for ages past attracted the notice of travellers. Ibn Haukul, the Persian geographer, in 917 A.C., speaks of Babel as a small village, and assumes that hardly any remains of Babylon were to be seen. Abulfeda describes the former merely as the place where Ibrahim ul Khaleel was cast into the fire. The city, he says, is now destroyed, and replaced by a diminutive hamlet, and, quoting from Ibn Haukul, he calls it the most ancient structure of Irak, from which the surrounding country took its name. "The Canaanitish kings and their descendants dwelt here; its ruins declare it to have been an extensive city." Benjamin of Tudela, a Jewish traveller of the twelfth century, remarks that nothing was to be seen but the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, into which no one dared to enter, on account of the serpents and scorpions with which it was infested. In 1583, Eldred, an English merchant, on his way from Bir to Bagdad, passed the "old mighty city of Babylon, many ruins whereof are easily to be seen by daylight:"

and he mentions, in particular, the Tower of Babel, which he describes as a quarter of a mile in circuit, and about the height of St. Paul's, but it "showeth much bigger;" and he farther states that it was built of very large sun-dried bricks, cemented by courses of "mattes, made of canes, as though they had been laid within one yeere."

Rawolff, who visited the place in the sixteenth century, speaks of the remains of an ancient bridge, of the relics of ancient fortifications, and of the Temple of Belus, which was so much destroyed, and so full of venomous animals, that it could only be approached during two months of winter, when they do not leave their holes.

In 1616, Pietro della Valle visited the ruins, and described them rather generally as a confused heap of fragments, so covered over with earth that they looked sometimes as much like hills as buildings. There are on record the narratives of several other persons who travelled thither during the same century; but Niebuhr in 1765, and Beauchamp twenty years later, are the first among more modern authors who have given any account of the remains. The latter states that the ruins of Babylon are very conspicuous about one league north of the town of Hillah. "Above all the rest is one which is rather flat on the top, of an irregular form, about thirty toises or 180 feet high, and much cut up by furrows down the sides. It would never have been taken for a work of man, were it not for the regular layers of bricks which are visible, and which prove that it was no natural hill. Beyond this mound, on the bank of the river, are immense masses of building, which supplied bricks for the building of Hillah."

Besides these ruins, M. de Beauchamp likewise mentions a brick wall, which he calculates must have been sixty feet thick. "It ran," he observes, "parallel with the river, and may have been part of the wall of the city. I discovered also a subterranean channel, which, instead of being vaulted, was covered with flat stones three feet broad by six or seven long. These ruins extend several miles to the north of Hillah, and satisfactorily prove this to have been the site of ancient Babylon." He also alludes to Brouss, on the opposite side of the river, but he does not describe it.

A few years after, Olivier visited these ruins, which he describes as being so far from presenting any traces of a

city, that a careful examination is required before some of the mounds, dug into on all sides, are discovered. Among these heaps, he particularizes one, which, he says, appears to be the remains of the Temple of Belus, built by Semiramis. The surface of it is formed of earth; but from the interior the Arabs dig out large baked bricks, cemented with a layer of reeds and bitumen; and the circumference he estimates at 1100 to 1200 ordinary paces. This is certainly the Mujelibé, as he says that it is situated about one league north of Hillah; and he adds, that between it and the river there are a great many heaps, and many foundations of ancient walls.

"Here it is that in general are found the large bricks on which are the inscriptions in unknown characters. There are some ruins to be found on the west side of the Euphrates, where likewise are sometimes found bricks with inscriptions on them; but I sought in vain for traces of the palace of the kings, nor could I discover, in any direction, the ramparts or walls of the city." Hence it is plain that Olivier did not see, or, at least, did not visit, the Birs.

The first comprehensive and authentic account we possess is from the pen of Claudius James Rich, of the East India Company's civil service, who for many years filled the important situation of Resident at Bagdad, and, through the consideration he enjoyed from his official situation and high character, possessed peculiar advantages for prosecuting his researches. Of these he fully availed himself; and, repairing to Hillah, accompanied by the requisite guards, he spent ten days upon the ground, zealously occupied in investigation and inquiry. We shall, therefore, take his description of these ruins as the groundwork of our own, adding what farther may appear expedient from the observations of subsequent writers.

"From the accounts of modern travellers," says he, "I had expected to have found on the site of Babylon more or less than I actually did. Less, because I could have formed no conception of the prodigious extent of the whole ruins, or of the size, solidity, and perfect state of some of the parts of them; and more, because I thought that I should have distinguished some traces, however imperfect, of many of the principal structures of Babylon. I imagined, I should have said, 'Here were the walls, and such must have been the extent of the area; there stood the pal

ace, and this, most assuredly, was the Tower of Belus.' I was completely deceived: instead of a few insulated mounds, I found the whole face of the country covered with vestiges of buildings, in some places consisting of brick walls surprisingly fresh, in others merely of a vast succession of mounds of rubbish, of such indeterminate figures, variety, and extent, as to involve the person who should have formed any theory in inextricable confusion. . . . . I shall confine myself, in the present Memoir, to a plain, minute, and accurate statement of what I actually saw, avoiding all conjectures except where they may tend to throw light on the description, or be the means of exciting others to inquiry and consideration.

"The whole country between Bagdad and Hillah is a perfectly flat and (with the exception of a few spots as you approach the latter place) uncultivated waste. That it was at some former period in a far different state, is evident from the number of canals by which it is traversed, now dry and neglected, and the quantity of heaps of earth, covered with fragments of brick and broken tiles, which are seen in every direction—the indisputable traces of former population."*

Little need be added to this general description of the appearances on the ground, for the accuracy of which every one who has visited the spot will readily vouch. The wide extent of mounds and vestiges of buildings must, in truth, arrest the attention of every beholder, who, at the same time, will not fail to remark how little the shapeless heaps on which he gazes can suggest in any degree either the nature or object of the structures of which they are the wrecks. After a minute account of the surrounding country, Mr. Rich goes on to describe the ruins. The principal masses on the eastern side of the river extend from a point about two miles north of Hillah for a space of three miles in the same direction, and are chiefly embraced by a long circular† mound, which commences near the southeast corner of the Mujelibé, and, taking a wide detour to the eastward, terminates at the southeast corner of the eminence called the Hill of Amran. There is, besides, a long ridge called

* Narrative of a Journey to the Site of Babylon, &c., by Claudius James Rich, Esq., 8vo, London, 1839, p. 33–46.

† Sir R. K. Porter describes it as two straight lines converging to an angle.

by him the Embankment, which extends 750 yards along the river, and, bending to the eastward, is continued beyond the village of Jumjuma, till, farther east, it crosses the road from Hillah to Bagdad. The whole area included within these rampart-like mounds is two miles and 600 yards from east to west, and two miles 1000 yards from north to south. It is again cut nearly in half, longitudinally, first, by a straight dike, like the boundary, but of less magnitude, of which only a mile in length remains; and there is to the west of this a still smaller and shorter ridge, which terminates to the north in a high heap of rubbish of a red colour, nearly 300 yards long and 100 broad, but containing few whole bricks. All these, and the rest of the ruins hereafter to be described, consist of mounds of earth formed by the decomposition of buildings channelled by the weather, and the surface of them strewed with pieces of brick, bitumen, and pottery.

Beyond the southern enclosure or embankment, which affords little interest, and proceeding towards the north, is found the first grand mass of ruins, which, in consequence of having upon it a small domed building, said to be the tomb of a son of Ali named Amran, has been named the Hill of Amran. Its figure approaches that of a quadrangle, of about 1100 yards long and 800 broad, very irregular in height, but rising in the highest part from fifty to sixty feet above the plain. It has been much dug into for the purpose of procuring bricks; but there is nothing in its appearance to require a more particular description. On the north of this mound there is a valley of 550 yards in length, covered with tufts of rank grass, and crossed by a low ridge of ruins. To this succeeds the second important class of remains, which form nearly a square of 700 yards in length and breadth, and are connected with the mounds of Amran by a bank of considerable height, and nearly 100 yards in breadth. This square, named the Kasr or Palace, Mr. Rich considers as the most interesting part of the Babylonian ruins, as all that can be seen of it attests its having been composed of buildings far superior to any which have left traces in the eastern quarter. The bricks are of the finest description, and, notwithstanding the immense quantities of them that have been carried off, they appear still to be abundant. But the search for them has caused farther dilapidation and confusion, by burrowing into the mound,

and cutting it into ravines in all quarters, so that it is impossible to guess at the original plan of the structure. In these excavations, walls of burned brick and excellent mortar are constantly met with, and fragments of alabaster vessels, fine earthenware, marble, and great quantities of varnished tiles, the glazing and colouring of which are surprisingly fresh. He found in a hollow a sepulchral urn of earthenware, and near it some human bones, which pulverized with the touch. One ravine, hollowed out by explorers, ran into its substance near 100 yards by thirty feet wide, and forty to fifty deep, displaying on one side some yards of a perfect wall, the front, no doubt, of some building; the other, an utterly confused mass of rubbish, as if the way had been made through a solid structure. At the south end was found a subterraneous passage, floored and walled with large bricks laid in bitumen, and covered over with blocks of sandstone a yard thick and several yards long. It was half full of brackish water, is nearly seven feet in height, and, the workmen said, increased farther on so much in size that a horseman might pass through it. The superstructure over it is cemented with bitumen; in other parts of the ravine mortar has been used; and all the bricks have writing on them. At the northern end of this cavity, Mr. Rich, in consequence of hearing from an old Arab of an image or idol of black stone having been seen, set some men to excavate, and disinterred a lion,* rudely sculptured in dark gray stone, and of colossal dimensions, standing on a pedestal.

A little to the west of the ravine is a pile of building, consisting of several walls and piers, which face the cardinal points, eight feet in thickness, in some places ornamented with niches, and in others strengthened by pilasters and buttresses built of fine burned brick, still perfectly clean and sharp, laid in lime cement of such tenacity that those whose business it is to find bricks have given up working on account of the extreme difficulty of extracting them whole. The tops of those walls are broken, so that they may have originally been much higher. This remarkable ruin is by the natives called the Kasr or Palace, which appellation has been used to distinguish the whole

* This lion, having been again disinterred, and examined by the officers of the Euphrates expedition, has been pronounced to be an elephant, of which the trunk is broken off.

quadrangular mass. A little to the north-northeast may be seen the singular tree, the only one found near these remains, said by the Arabs to have flourished in ancient Babylon, and to have been miraculously preserved to afford Ali a convenient place to tie up his horse after the battle of Hillah. It is thought to resemble the lignum vitæ; but it is, in fact, a peculiar species of tamarisk.

Mr. Rich then describes the embankment on the river-side, which is separated on the east from those of Amran and the Kasr by a winding valley or ravine 150 yards broad, the bottom of which is covered with nitrous efflorescence, and apparently never had any buildings on it. The face of the mound to the river-side is abrupt and perpendicular, having been cut by the action of the water, and exposes at the top a number of urns filled with human bones, which have not undergone the action of fire. The river has encroached here, as fragments of masonry are seen in the water beneath the bank.

The other mounds within this space deserve little attention, as they present no remarkable appearance; but the huge mass farthest north requires particular notice. It is called by the Arabs Mukalibé or Mujelibé, the first of which words means the "overturned," a term which, Mr. Rich observes, is sometimes applied to the Kasr. The second, Mujelibé, has been rendered "the place of captivity," from jalib, "a captive;" and is supposed to identify the place as the prison in which the Israelites were confined. It is of an oblong shape, but irregular in its sides, which face the cardinal points—the northern one being 200 yards in length, the southern 219, the eastern 182, and the western 136. Its height is still more unequal, but at the highest point, which is the southeastern angle, it measures 141 feet. Near the summit of the western face, which is the least elevated part, there appears a low wall with interruptions, built of unburned bricks mixed up with chopped straw or reeds, and cemented with clay-mortar of great thickness, having between every course a layer of reeds. On the north side there are vestiges of a similar construction. The southwestern angle is crowned by something like a turret or lantern; the other angles are in a less perfect state, but may once have been similarly ornamented. All its faces are furrowed by the weather, and in some parts ploughed to a very great depth. The top is

covered with heaps of rubbish, in digging into some of which layers of broken bricks cemented with mortar are discovered, and entire ones with inscriptions may here and there be found; the whole being interspersed with innumerable fragments of pottery, bitumen, pebbles, vitrified scoria, and even shells, bits of glass, and mother-of-pearl. There were dens of wild beasts in several parts; and Mr. Rich perceived in some a strong smell like that of a lion. Bones of sheep and other animals, with abundance of porcupine quills, were seen in the cavities, with numbers of bats and owls. It is a singular coincidence, that here, for the first time, he became aware of the belief held by the natives as to the existence of satyrs—animals like men from the waist upward, but having the thighs and legs of a goat. It is added, they hunt them with dogs, and eat the lower part, abstaining from the upper portion of the figure on account of its resemblance.

Having heard that a coffin of mulberry-wood, containing a human body, swathed in tight wrappers and partially covered with bitumen, had been observed in a passage which leads into the interior of the mound, he set twelve men to work, in order to uncover the cellar to which it leads. They dug into a shaft or hollow pier sixty feet square, lined with brick laid in bitumen and filled with earth, in which they got a brass spike, some earthen vessels, and a beam of date-tree; and, after three or four days' toil, and making their way through several passages, lined chiefly with fine bricks, but exhibiting also some that were unburned, they found a wooden coffin, containing a skeleton in high preservation. Under the head of it was a round pebble, on the outside a bird, and in the inside an ornament of the same material, which had probably been suspended to some part of the corpse. A little farther on was seen the skeleton of a child. No doubt can be entertained of their antiquity.

Such are the principal remains on the eastern side of the river. Upon the western, Mr. Rich found but one object worthy of much attention; and, indeed, on looking to that quarter from the height of the Mujelibé, none else was to be seen. The ruin in question was the Birs Nimrod, by far the most interesting and gigantic of the whole that underwent his examination. This huge and venerable pile,

which is situated about six miles* southwest of Hillah, is a mound of an oblong figure, the total circumference of which is 762 yards. The eastern side is cloven by a deep furrow, and is not more than fifty or sixty feet high; but the opposite side rises in a conical figure to an elevation of 198, and is crowned by a solid pile of brickwork, thirty-seven in height by twenty-eight in breadth, diminishing in thickness to the top, which is broken and irregular. It is rent by a fissure to a great extent, and is also perforated by square holes, disposed in rhomboids. The fine bricks of which it is built have inscriptions on them; and so admirable is the cement by which they are fastened, and which appears to be lime-mortar, that, though the layers are so close together that it is difficult to discern what substance is between them, it is nearly impossible to extract one of them whole. The other parts of the summit are occupied by immense fragments of brickwork, of no determinate figure, tumbled together, and converted into solid vitrified masses, as if they had undergone the action of the fiercest fire, or been blown up with gunpowder, the layers being still perfectly discernible: a curious fact, and one for which Mr. Rich professes himself quite unable to account.

The whole of the mound on which those fragments are deposited is itself a ruin, channelled by the weather, strewed also with the usual debris, as well as with pieces of black stone, sandstone, and marble. In the eastern face, layers of unburned brick are plainly to be seen, but no reeds were discernible in any part, and in the north side may be observed traces of building exactly similar to the brick pile. At the foot of the mound a step is observed, scarcely elevated above the plain, but exceeding in extent, by several feet each way, the true or measured base; and there is a quadrangular enclosure around the whole, as at the Mujelibé, at once much more perfect and of greater dimensions. At a trifling distance from the Birs, and parallel with its eastern face, is a mound, not inferior to that of the Kasr in elevation, but much longer than it is broad. On its top are two small oratories, one of which is called Makam Ibrahim ul Khaleel; and around the Birs to a considerable extent are traces of smaller elevations.

This very remarkable ruin, more striking from its utter

* By some of the officers of the Euphrates expedition it is considered to be ten or eleven.

loneliness, burst upon Mr. Rich's view under circumstances of a peculiarly impressive nature. It was a stormy morning, and dark clouds obscured every surrounding object, till, when just within a favourable distance, they broke, and discovered the Birs, with its picturesque mound, relieved against the opening sky, yet enveloped with a gauzy haze that added to the sentiment of mysterious awe which the sight of this venerable pile cannot fail to inspire.

The mound of Al Heimar resembles the one now described, though on a much smaller scale, and stands about six miles east of Hillah, being generally included among the Babylonian ruins. It is a conical mass of rubbish, surmounted by a structure of brickwork, which, like that of the Birs, but far inferior in style, evidently rises from the foundation. It is called Al Heimar from its red colour.

Several other remains are noticed in the vicinity of these, the most remarkable of which are Nebbi Eyoub, the tomb of the prophet Job, three leagues south of Hillah, near the Euphrates, with a canal and two large mounds; and a collection of ruins, named Boursa by the natives, near Jerbouiya, a village four leagues south from the same town, but distant from the river. Two considerable elevations are visible from the top of the Mujelibé, looking southward, and another, called Towereij, to the northwest. The governor also mentioned one as large as the Mujelibé, thirty-five hours south of Hillah, where, a few years ago, a cap or diadem, and some other articles of fine gold were found. This was probably Mugheyer, of which we shall hereafter have occasion to speak more at length.

Such is an abstract of Mr. Rich's account of these interesting relics; and, in the few observations which he has offered regarding them, his object has rather been to enable his readers to form their own opinion, or to make their own conjectures, than to pronounce any decision himself. He has been followed by Mr. Buckingham and Sir Robert Ker Porter, who have each of them given a detailed narrative, not only of what they saw, but of the conclusions they arrived at, respecting the various mounds which they describe from personal inspection. The first-mentioned gentleman spent only two days in his examination, the latter ten; but, as the result very nearly corresponds with

that attained by Mr. Rich, we shall only notice the points on which any difference exists. Mr. Buckingham, indeed, on all occasions, refers to the Memoir as to a document which cannot be improved in point of accuracy. He adopts Rich's measurements generally, and quotes extensively from his publication. He thinks the Mujelibé was certainly enclosed by walls and ditches, but differs entirely from those who have been disposed to regard it as the ruins of the Temple of Belus; being satisfied that it must have comprised a variety of edifices, varying in form as well as in use and materials. On its exterior surface are the remains of walls sufficient to prove that its base is still a solid building, very little enlarged by debris; while the summit, for similar reasons, affords ample evidence that its elevation could never have much exceeded that of its present height. All this goes to establish that it cannot be the Tower of Belus, which must have left an infinitely larger quantity of ruins. Its area, too, is larger than what has been attributed to that celebrated structure, which, besides, is stated by Diodorus, Strabo, and others, to have been built of fire-burned bricks and bitumen, whereas the chief part of the Mujelibé is composed of sun-dried ones, cemented with clay mortar and layers of reeds or rushes.

Mr. Buckingham is rather disposed to consider this mound as the old castellated palace mentioned by Diodorus, which he supposes to have been built on the side of the river opposite to the Temple of Belus.

The Kasr, distant from the Mujelibé somewhat more than a mile, is, he observes, occasionally called Babel; and here he conjectures was the royal abode to which were attached the hanging gardens. "Were it not that the palaces are said to have been seated on opposite sides of the river, I should have said, when looking towards the Mujelibé, There was certainly the old palace, and here is the site of the new;" but this he acknowledges to be at variance with all existing accounts, though he suggests that the stream may have changed its course, and once passed between them.

Viewing the mounds of Amran and the Kasr, connected together as they are with a broad and lofty ridge like a causeway, and faced by an embankment on the edge of the river, he is inclined to regard them as forming the space and buildings which, according to Diodorus and

Strabo, were surrounded by three walls, one of sixty stadia in circuit, one of forty, and a third, of which the extent is not mentioned. The first of these walls, he observes, may be represented by the mound which strikes off from the east corner of the embankment, and which, he says, may be traced at its northern end in an eminence appearing northwest of the Mujelibé. The wall of forty stadia is the circular ridge mentioned by Mr. Rich, joining the southeastern corner of Amran, and coinciding nearly with the southeast angle of the Mujelibé. The third he considers to be represented by the straight mounds E and F of Mr. Rich's plan.*

After surveying this place, Mr. Buckingham and his companion rode eastward across the country, to try if they could find any traces of the walls of Babylon. Their more definite object was Al Heimar, in their way to which they saw many straight lines of mounds running in various directions, some intersecting others, which that gentleman identifies at once as being the remains of the rectilinear streets of the old capital, because they rise too high above the soil to be formed of the earth from the intervening space, which was level with the surrounding land. Had Mr. Buckingham been better acquainted with the nature of the ancient canals of Babylonia, he would have known that their banks generally rose above the surface; and that these mounds, therefore, more probably represent aqueducts than houses, which were too insignificant both in point of size and material to have continued so long where so many great fabrics have entirely disappeared.

This author enters into a long and elaborate disquisition to prove that the mound at Al Heimar is the remains of part of the wall of the ancient metropolis; a conclusion which we shall notice hereafter. As to the Birs Nimrod, he estimates the mound at 200 feet high, and the brick building on the top at fifty more. He describes four stages in this remarkable ruin, besides the step already mentioned, a little raised above the ground, and exceeding in extent by several feet the true base of the building. Within this rises the lowest stage, showing a part of its material only where a pit has been dug or worn. These are of sun-dried though firmly made brick, cemented with bitu-

* Rich's Journey to the Site of Babylon, &c., p. 60.

men or mortar, but without reeds. The second stage presents at the northeast angle, which is exposed, a wall, externally, at least, of burned brick. The third, which, like the last, recedes in a due proportion, is also formed of the same material. Above all rises the fourth and last stage, which is the tower-like pile. The summit of this, still 250 feet above its base, occupies, says he, nearly an area of 100 feet, only one side of which is now erect, being a wall of thirty feet in breadth, fifteen in thickness, and fifty feet high. He adverts to the vitrified masses at its foot, and seems to think that, had fuel been collected in the upper stage, and set on fire, it might have burst the fabric asunder, and produced such effects; alluding here to a quotation by Sir Isaac Newton from Vitringa, in which that author speaks of a Parthian king having, about 130 years B.C., burned many of the temples of the Babylonians with fire. Mr. Buckingham entertains no doubt that this is really the remains of the Tower of Belus, notwithstanding the objections that may be urged against it on the ground of its locality or otherwise.

Sir R. K. Porter spent ten days at Hillah, great part of which was employed in examining the ruins; and his accounts, though in some respects more detailed, differ little in substance from those furnished by Mr. Rich. He limits the circumference of the Birs Nimrod to 694 yards; but the difference between this and the measurement of his predecessor may probably have arisen from the difficulty of determining the exact limit of the base. The mound he states to be 200 feet high, and the fragments of the brick wall thirty-five. He remarked that in the upper part of the masonry, lime is exclusively used for cement, while bitumen has been confined to the lower parts of the building. The bricks, too, used below were larger, so that in some parts of the wall, exposed at the eastern angle, he found them twelve inches and three quarters square, by four inches and three quarters thick, and laid in mortar an inch deep. In a portion of the wall at the northwest angle, the several courses, instead of being on a level, had a gentle inclination; those facing the north sloped towards the east, and those on the western face towards the south. Still lower down, a large hole afforded a peep into what Sir Robert calls the *pith* of the building, which was composed of large sun-dried bricks, cemented with clay-mortar mixed

with broken straw or reeds to the thickness of an inch and a half. Hence he supposes that the whole interior of the lower part is constructed of these materials, each stage or story being cased with furnace-baked bricks, binding the rest together; and that the bitumen was used only near the foundation, where damp was likely to do injury. He entertains no doubt that the Birs is the ancient Temple of Belus. Of the Mujelibé his description is quite the same as that of Mr. Rich, but his measurements vary. As to its height he nearly agrees, the southeast corner being the highest point; but states that the north side measures 552 feet; the south, 230; the east, 230; and the west, 551. In this there is probably some error, as the south, instead of the west side, must correspond with the northern one. He thinks it never rose much higher than at present, and concludes that it must have been a platform on which more magnificent buildings were meant to be erected, as at Persepolis. He repudiates entirely the opinion that this could have been the Tower of Belus, and inclines to consider it as the remains of the castellated palace.

In the measurements of the Kasr he agrees in the main with Mr. Rich, since whose visit, he remarks, the excavations had greatly altered its external form. Here, also, he observed the use of bitumen in the lower part of the building, but adds that the core or pith of these mounds is composed of furnace-baked bricks cemented with lime. He entertains no doubt that the two mounds of Amran and the Kasr conjointly formed the new palace, of which the first enclosure was the rampart-like mass that joins it to the Mujelibé, and which Sir Robert lays down as forming an angle with the apex pointing eastward instead of a circular sweep. The second and third enclosures he conceives to be represented by the several ridges which divide the enclosed space in a direction from north to south, and subtending the angle, along the summit of one of which the present road to Hillah runs. He considers Rennell's idea of the river having ever flowed between the Mujelibé and Kasr as totally chimerical.

At Al Heimar, Porter discovered nothing new. He visited certain mounds about a mile to the eastward, but conceives that they could never have stood within the precincts of Babylon. He took considerable pains, also, in

searching for ruins on the western side of the river, and found two groups of mounds between the village Anana and the Birs. The largest of these was thirty-five feet high, and the country was dotted with heaps. He asks whether these can be the remains of the lesser palace. He observed also, in proceeding round by the village Thamasia, that for a mile and three quarters before reaching the Birs, the land was covered with the usual vestiges, which continued to the foot of that ruin; and, relying on this fact, he argues that the Birs did actually occupy a space in the city.

Such is the amount of the three best descriptions of the Babylonian remains, written by persons who, in our own day, have enjoyed the most favourable opportunities for carrying on their investigations; and it will be seen that, upon comparing the delineations of ancient writers with the actual state of the ruins, they have all come to the conclusion that the Temple of Belus is represented by the Birs Nimrod, and the palace and hanging gardens by the ruins of the Kasr, in combination, perhaps, with those of the Amran Hill.

To reconcile the positions of these two places, and the present course of the Euphrates, with the details given by Herodotus, Diodorus, Strabo, and others, appears impossible. Yet, from many circumstances, it seems more probable that their writings have been inaccurately copied, or imperfectly understood by us, than that the mounds in question can represent any other buildings of the ancient capital than those now specified. For, in the first place, assuming that the Euphrates has changed its course, the distance of from seven to eleven miles at least—which we find between the Birs* and the Kasr—can never be made to correspond with that which would appear to have existed between these celebrated edifices according to every description of Babylon that has reached our times. On the other hand, it must be admitted that no other structures could have left remains so gigantic as those which have just been described, and are presumed to represent the Temple of Belus and the palace of Nebuchadnezzar.

So great, indeed, is the distance between the principal

* A late traveller, Colonel Chesney, asserts, that the distance of the Birs from Hillah is not less than ten miles; if this be so, it must be eleven, at least, from the Kasr.

mounds, that it seems impossible, by any process of measurement, to bring them within the space assigned to the walls of the old city. For, even supposing the enclosed sections in each division of it—in one of which was the palace, in the other the Temple of Belus, as mentioned by Herodotus—not to have been, mathematically speaking, in the centre of their respective squares, it is scarcely possible to wrest the sense so far as to imagine that either building could have been placed in a corner or at an extremity of the town; and yet, if the Birs and Kasr are assumed to represent the temple and palace described by the Greek historian, such must needs be the case with one of them, supposing the other to have been near the centre of its division.

Some very ingenious antiquaries, in seeking for the boundaries of ancient Babylon, have been inclined to regard the Birs as forming the southwestern angle of the city; Al Heimar as that of the southeast; the Towebah as representing the northeast angle; while the one to the northwest must be looked for in the marshes that stretch westward in that quarter. This, of course, would exclude the Birs from the distinction, which others are disposed to bestow upon it, of representing the Temple of Belus, even if we concede to the metropolis the utmost extent assigned by any historian; but there appears to be no ground for supposing such a theory, nor does actual observation warrant it. The writer of these pages examined great part of the ground between Al Heimar and the river, in a line with the Birs, and northward from Al Heimar towards the Towebah; and the result was, that though great part of the country appeared covered with vestiges of former buildings, he not only failed in detecting any continuous course of mounds, such as might indicate the direction of the wall, but actually observed a greater number of these remains eastward of the imaginary line than to the west of it.

Mr. Buckingham is disposed to regard that conical mound as constituting a portion of the ramparts of Babylon. He probably overlooked the distance between Al Heimar and the Birs—not less than fifteen miles*—which would either shut out his Tower of Belus altogether, or make it nothing more than a corner bastion. Sir Robert

* According to Colonel Chesney, more than twenty.

Porter, with better judgment, is disposed to exclude Al Heimar and all the mounds eastward of it from the space assigned by Herodotus; but even this will not remove the stubborn obstacle, with which every theory for reconciling ancient accounts with modern appearances is met at the threshold, the distance between the principal masses of ruins.

A good deal of stress has been laid upon the probability of considerable changes having taken place in the course of the Euphrates; and there can be no doubt that such have occurred, though in what direction and to what extent has not hitherto been ascertained. Its encroachments on the mound, called by Mr. Rich "the embankment," by which so many sepulchral vases have been brought to view, is obvious; and through the whole district, the remains of mason-work on its sides, and even in the water, bear witness to the former existence of building where the river now flows. Colonel Chesney conceives that he saw a former bed of the stream in the tract between its present course and the site of the Birs; and another gentleman, who visited and examined that part of the country with great care, has suggested that there is quite sufficient space between the Birs and the mound of Ibrahim ul Khaleel to admit of the river, or a branch of it, having run between them. In this case, the positions of these two mounds would identify them as the remains of the Temple of Belus and the palace, just in the proper situations at either side of the stream. But the remains of old canals to the eastward, between the Birs and Hillah, would seem to indicate that the Euphrates must of old, as well as now, have run in that direction; and, at all events, we should be equally at a loss what to make of the gigantic ruins on the present eastern bank—the Mujelibé, the Kasr, and others —which must represent some stately fabrics pertaining to the city.

Another conjecture has been hazarded with regard to the Birs, namely, that it may be the remains of a temple of the ancient Borsippa or Bursif, which is mentioned as being near ancient Babylon, if not once forming a section of it. In this place, after the downfall of the Empire, and partial destruction of the great city, a number of the Chaldean priests and artificers took up their abode; and thither also, we learn, Labynetus fled from Cyrus, after the conquest by that prince.

The name *Bursif*, so easily passing into Birs, seems to favour this idea, which would also account for the otherwise unintelligible appellation by which this remarkable ruin is known; for the word *Birs* has no signification in Arabic or the cognate languages.

Mr. Rich, it is true, alludes to a collection of mounds, four or five hours south of Hillah, near the village Jerbouiyah, known by the name of Boursa, which may lay claim to being the Borsippa mentioned by Strabo and other writers. But Buckingham casts some doubt on the position, and even on the existence of this Boursa; for it appears, that of all his escort, there was only one man who pretended to any acquaintance with the place, and even he had no clear notions respecting it. Sir R. Porter mentions a station called Boursa Shishara, two hours from Kiahya Khan, on the way from Bagdad to Hillah, where is a true Babylonian mound thirty feet high, with a layer of reeds between each course of bricks; and he speculates on the possibility of this having been the Borsippa where Alexander halted on his way from Ecbatana to Babylon.

But, if the Birs be pronounced a relic of Borsippa and not of Babylon, where are we to look for the Temple of Belus, which, of all the buildings in that metropolis, must, from its uncommon height, have left the most imposing ruins? It has been shown that neither the Mujelibé nor Kasr can pretend to be its representative, and there is none other to fall back upon.

There is, indeed, no small difficulty in reconciling the accounts of historians respecting the state of this celebrated structure from time to time. Herodotus, who describes it as an eyewitness 430 years B.C., though he alludes to the destruction of its walls by Darius, and the partial pillage of its shrines by Xerxes, speaks of it as by no means dilapidated; on the contrary, he describes its two walls as still existing, the outer one castellated and 200 cubits high, and the Temple of Belus as being quite perfect and undesecrated, except by the plunder of its golden image by the Persian prince. Yet barely a century afterward, Alexander, according to Arrian, found it so encumbered by ruins that 10,000 men were not able to remove them in two months; while Berosus, a priest of Belus, who flourished at the same period, writes a history of the Chaldean cosmogony chiefly from the allegorical representations which

he saw on the walls of this very temple. That it must, however, have suffered greatly prior to this time, is certain; and, in tracing the progress of decay, we have witnessed a rapidity of destruction, which is the more impressive, as it corresponds so accurately with all the denunciations of divine wrath which were hurled against the sinful and devoted city. But Providence works by instruments, and it is striking indeed to trace the Almighty hand in the human agents who overwhelmed that mighty city by a rapid succession of attacks; nor need we be surprised at the disappearance of a great part of her ruins, when we reflect that out of them were built, in succession, Seleucia and Ctesiphon, Coché, Cufa, Kerbelah, Meshed Ali, Bagdad old and new, besides many smaller towns and villages. No wonder that, when the more solid materials were carried off, the mud and sun-burned bricks, exposed to the action of rain and wind, should crumble into the soil whence they were taken.

A late and very acute traveller, Mr. Ainsworth, whose work has already been referred to, has suggested a change of names for the several ruins, which he thinks will simplify the investigation. The Mujelibé, he says, ought to be called *Babel;* and he applies the former term to the Kasr, which last appellation he again bestows upon the mound called by Mr. Rich the embankment. We do not know to what extent he prosecuted his discoveries upon the spot; but it appears to us that, had he inquired minutely, he would scarcely have found grounds on which to rest his new nomenclature. We think he would rather have adopted the conclusion held by other travellers, that the northern mound could never have been much higher than it now is, and, consequently, that it could not be the Tower of Belus; while certainly there is a strong internal evidence that the Kasr, called by him the Mujelibé, represents the palace and hanging gardens. We think him greatly in error, too, in the elevation which he assigns to the several mounds: sixty-four feet to the northernmost, or Mujelibé of Rich; twenty-eight feet to the Kasr of the same author; twenty-three feet to the Amran ibn Ali. In these there can be no doubt of his being mistaken. The Birs, according to him, belonged to the most westerly quarter of Babylon, if not to a distinct city, and is there-

fore more likely to represent Borsippa than the Tower of Belus.

There is one fact in connexion with the most remarkable of these relics which we cannot dismiss without a few more observations. All travellers who have ascended the Birs have taken notice of the singular heaps of brickwork scattered on the summit of the mound, at the foot of the remnant of wall still standing. To the writer of this volume they appeared the most striking of all the ruins. That they have undergone the most violent action of fire, is evident from the complete vitrification which has taken place in many of the masses. Yet how a heat sufficient to produce such an effect could have been applied at such a height from the ground, is unaccountable. They now lie upon a spot elevated 200 feet above the plain, and must have fallen from some much more lofty position, for the structure which still remains, and of which they may be supposed to have originally formed a part, bears no mark of fire. The building originally cannot have contained any great proportion of combustible materials; and to produce so intense a heat by substances carried to such an elevation would have been almost impossible, from the want of space to pile them on. Nothing, we should be inclined to say, short of the most powerful action of electric fire, could produce the complete yet circumscribed fusion which is here observed; for that the melted masses have had some connexion with the building yet remaining cannot be doubted. Of such a catastrophe we have no record, unless we accept as such the prophecy of Jeremiah,* "and her high gates shall be burned with fire;" but there are many events connected with the history of this city which remain in total obscurity, and this, we are inclined to think, must be placed among them. These fragments are of various hues, brown, yellow, and gray. Although fused into a solid mass, the courses of bricks are still visible, identifying them with the standing pile above; but so hardened have they been by the power of heat, that it is almost impossible to break off the smallest piece; and, though porous in texture, and full of air-holes and cavities, like other bricks, they require, on being submitted to the stone-cutter's lathe, the same machinery as is used to

* Chap. li., 58.

dress the hardest pebbles. Their specific gravity is very great, and they are capable of receiving a very good polish.

From the statements now made, it is obvious that, however much has been written on the subject, the locality of ancient Babylon is as yet but very imperfectly understood: a circumstance which arises chiefly from the difficulty of residence, and of making the necessary observations upon the spot, so that no traveller hitherto has been able to devote to the examination of the ruins themselves, as well as of the circumjacent country, that time and attention which are indispensable for illustrating so obscure a subject. But matters will probably not remain long thus. Something has already been done towards removing the obstacles that have hitherto existed: the Euphrates expedition has familiarized the Arabs on the banks of that river with the sight of Europeans; and we know that even now there are in those regions travellers peculiarly well qualified by intelligence, zeal, and perseverance for prosecuting these interesting investigations. Hence there is good ground to hope that the secrets of ancient Mesopotamia and Babylonia, historical, geographical, and antiquarian, will ere long be laid at least as open to the present generation as those of Egypt, Greece, and Rome.

CHAPTER VII.

Other Ruins of Babylonia and Chaldea.

Akkerkoof.—The Site of Accad.—Umgeyer—According to some Opinions, the ancient Orchoe.—Jibel Sanam.—Teredon.—Workha.—Sunkhera.—Yokha.—Til Eide.—Guttubeh.—Iskhuriah.—Zibliyeh.—Tel Siphr, &c.—Waasut or Cascara.—Seleucia and Ctesiphon.—Tauk e Kesra.—Cupidity of a Pacha.—Kalla mal Kesra.—Opis, Situation of.—Median Wall.—Traditions regarding its Use.—Sittace.—Sheriat el Beitha.—Samarra.—The Malwiyah.—Large Mosque.—Kaf or Chaf.—Giaoureah.—Kadesia.—Statue of black Basalt.—Tecreet.—Al Hadhr or Hatra.—Felugia.—New Fields of Enterprise for Explorers

Next to the ruins just described, and as certainly contemporary with them, we must notice the isolated but enormous pile of Akkerkoof or Aggerkoof, called also Tel Nimrod, and by the Turks Nimrod Tepessi. Sir R. Porter says the former name is only applied to the district around it. It is six miles from Bagdad, and stands upon a hillock that slopes gently upward from the level of the plain to a considerable height, above which it rises to an elevation of about 125 feet. Its general resemblance to the Birs Nimrod struck Mr. Rich forcibly; and the mass of the building, which is solid, is composed of unburned bricks mixed with chopped straw, having layers of reeds two inches thick between every five or six courses. These reeds protrude from the weather-worn edges of the bricks, communicating to the profile of the edifice a singular serrated look, visible from a distance. In appearance they are still perfectly fresh, differing only from those that grow in the circumjacent marshes in being a little darker in colour. As in the Birs, there are also here square holes running through the body of the pile, as if to afford ventilation. The shape is now so irregular, owing to the effect of time, that its original form can scarcely be detected; but it seems to have been a square, the sides of which faced the cardinal points. The circumference, taken above the mound of rubbish, is 300 feet, and the diameter at the largest part about 100. The mound consists of loose sandy earth, probably drifted by the wind, mingled with fragments

of brick, pottery, and half-vitrified clay. Like the Birs, it has a mound of debris on the eastern side; and this is supposed to indicate the site of Accad, one of the cities of Nimrod: a conjecture which is thought to be supported by its position with reference to Babylon, by the name of Akkerkoof, and the tradition which ascribes it to the mighty hunter. Embankments, and the usual debris, testify to its having been a considerable town; while its vicinity to Bagdad accounts sufficiently for the disappearance of its furnace-bricks and all transportable materials.

The remaining antiquities of Babylonia will not detain us long, as, though some may represent places of importance, they do not possess the great interest which attaches to the capital or to Nineveh. We shall mention a few of the most remarkable.

Following the course of the Euphrates, we find upon its right bank, about twenty-five miles southeast of Semava, and ten or eleven from the river-bank, the most perfect remains of one of those lofty edifices which, like the Birs and Akkerkoof, are supposed to have been Chaldean temples. It is called Mugeyer or Umgeyer, which in Arabic signifies "the place of bitumen;" and as it has not as yet, we believe, been described, if, indeed, it has ever before been visited by any modern traveller, we shall here introduce an account of it derived from personal inspection. It is a huge quadrangular building, rising to the height of eighty or a hundred feet above the plain, from a great mass of dilapidated matter. The lower half was hid from view by these ruins, out of which the mason-work emerged in two distinct stories. The sides, which faced the cardinal points, were on the west full sixty yards in length, and on the north about forty; there being no means at hand for more accurate measurement. The structure resembles that of the Birs, but there was no such fine masonry as appears on the top of the latter. The bricks were coarser and softer; many were marked with the arrow-headed character, and in most cases laid together in very thick beds of bitumen, which bore the impression of the matted reeds. The workmanship, on the whole, was very good, and much of it quite perfect, as there have not been any materials abstracted from it as at Babylon. The mass is pervaded with small holes as is the Birs; and a circular one was observed on the top, at present filled with rubbish,

but which may possibly descend into the building. The northern and western faces exhibited two distinct stories, the upper diminishing in extent as in some of the Indian pagodas, which it a good deal resembled; but the bricks were so altered by long exposure to the weather, that it was impossible to pronounce whether those that now met the eye constituted part of the original outside coating or not. Looking from the top, vestiges of a wall of no great thickness could be traced, apparently forming an enclosure to the building. Its north face, the only one at all perfect, measured 118 long paces; of the rest, only the corners were visible, and near the southeastern angle rose a pretty large conical mound, like the ruins of a bastion. There were many others about it, especially towards the southeast; and the earth was extensively covered with ruins, among which were fragments of sepulchral vases sticking out of the ground, flints, pebbles, and numerous pieces of old copper. The whole character of this edifice testifies that it must be coeval with the Birs. Mr. Ainsworth has pronounced it to be the ancient Orchoe of the Chaldeans, of the situation of which we know little; but there is rather more reason for believing that city to be represented by the ruins of Workha, in Chaldea Proper, and to which we shall soon allude. Mugeyer is also believed to stand on the banks of the ancient Pallacopas; but the exact course of that canal has not been traced in modern times, and there was nothing seen from the top of the ruin to confirm the idea. There were, however, one or two lofty mounds observed to the westward, bearing much the appearance of the place itself when first seen above the horizon; but circumstances did not permit us to visit them.

Of the remains to the south and eastward of this place little is known, although there is every reason to believe that relics abound in the course of the Pallacopas. Jibel Sanam, which marks the site of the ancient Teredon, a city built by Nebuchadnezzar at the mouth of that outlet of the Euphrates, is described as a true Babylonian mound of prodigious size, lofty, and of infinitely greater extent than the Birs, but in other respects resembling those already described.

The territory of ancient Chaldea, extending from Dewannieh and the Euphrates to the Boo je Heirat Canal, is thickly dotted with immense mounds, among which that

of Workha rises pre-eminent; but, from the difficulty of approaching it, owing to the surrounding lakes and marshes, it has never been examined. We could descry this elevation at a distance of about four miles, but were unable to reach it. Not far from Workha is seen Sunkhera, one of a large number of mounds forming a sort of circle, built of fire-burned bricks; the whole surface being strewed with scoriæ, agates and carnelian fragments, and bits of copper, but no glass. The chief one was very large, and from fifty to sixty feet high; and the entire circle must have been more than a mile in diameter. The surface of the land around it was irregular, raised in heights and hollows; but whether or not these were sites of buildings could not be ascertained. In the area were traces of foundations, a square consisting of houses and courts, which, as they do not rise above the level of the soil, are probably of recent date. The rest was undoubtedly ancient. To the north and east were several clusters of mounds, the largest of which was called Yokha, of considerable size, and in the centre of a wide tract of debris. To the northwest of this was observed a lofty pyramidal mass called Til Eide, surrounded by the relics of old habitations.

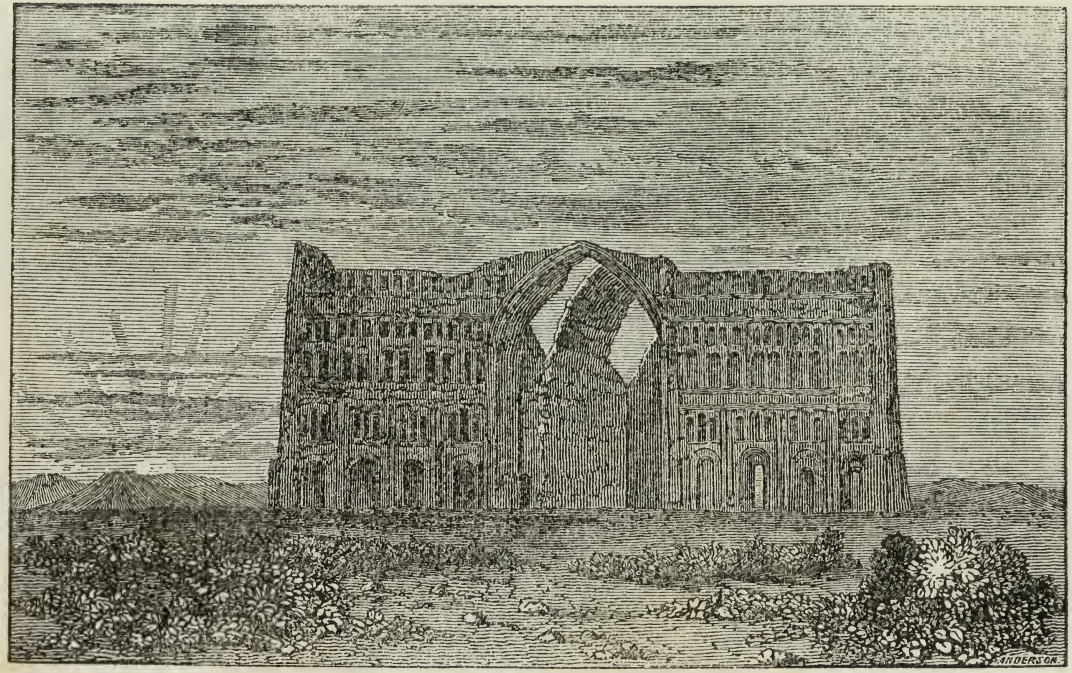
Six or eight miles northeast of this last, our attention was attracted by an elevation, which belonged to a place that must have been of very great magnitude in its day. It appeared to have been a quadrangle of at least five or six miles each way, and of which the building in question formed the northeastern corner. It was a structure like a great bastion, formed of fire-burned bricks of the usual size, with layers of reeds between each tier as at the Mujelibé, and rising to a height of at least fifty feet from the plain, including the *tuppeh* or hillock of ruins out of which it springs. It was split from top to bottom into four pieces, and each opening afforded the means of entrance into the interior, which was partially hollowed out; but whether by original construction or effected by the rains, is uncertain.

From the summit may be traced, by irregular heaps and fragments, the course of the northern and eastern sides, converging at right angles to each other. The greater part of the area was bare, as is usual in such cases, and dotted all over with the black camps of Arab tribes. Following the line of the north wall for nearly five miles, the country

on the northern side appeared also covered with debris, and a boundless extent of them stretched to the west of the square space; besides which, there are huge ridges about the same distance to the south, which the natives call Hummam. They gave no name to the ruins in general, but assigned to the country at large the appellation of Guttubeh. The evidences of an extensive population in former times were more remarkable here, perhaps, than in any other part of the Jezirah.

A large portion of this district is low, and, to a great extent, periodically overflowed, so that the remains were less conspicuous; but about thirty miles northward the mounds again become frequent. Among the most remarkable are those of Iskhuriah, not far from the Tigris; and Zibliyeh, southwest of the former, nearly half way between the two rivers. The first is a name applied by the Arabs to a huge group, of which the highest may rise to twenty-five or thirty feet above the plain, and are covered with immense quantities of scoriæ and slag-like stones resembling the refuse of a brick furnace. These are either black, porous, hard, and heavy, or composed of yellow vitrified matter, being, in some cases, several feet square by six inches thick. The mounds themselves, except in this particular, are not very remarkable; but the size and multitude of the slabs were perplexing. It was told us that they are formed into millstones and various other articles; and, in truth, they might be supposed to have constituted some peculiar manufactory. The Arab name implies a "stony" place; and the tradition regarding them is, that this was the country of Lot (*Loot*), and that Heaven in its wrath showered them down on the wicked inhabitants. Looking from the top of the highest of these mounds, the whole region seemed covered with others of various sizes, insomuch that there was scarcely a quarter of the horizon without a height of some sort, all of which must be the remains of towns or villages.

The line of march, adopted from a camp of the Zobeid Arabs where we had halted for a night, led, for twelve or fourteen miles, over a country littered with ruins, to a group which rose in a circular space covered with bricks and potsherds. Of these, the principal objects were four pyramidal mounds, rising abruptly to a height of forty or fifty feet, and built of sun-dried brick. Two or three miles



Tauk e Kesra.

distant from these was a still loftier structure, consisting of a tower or bastion-shaped building, about eighty feet in height. The exterior of it was formed of sun-dried brick, like the Mujelibé, and pierced with holes; but the interior was composed of furnace-baked bricks, like those of the Birs and similar edifices. The walls were plainly perceived in one part, and the external coating of sun-dried brick was deeply furrowed by the rains. The Arabs called it Zibliyeh, and gave a trivial name to each of the lesser mounds. The traces of a very large canal and two or three smaller ones, crossing from north to south near this place, showed that the district had been extensive and well cultivated.

These are but a very few of the relics of antiquity that lie scattered over this comparatively small tract, to which might be added many more, such as Tel Siphr, Atlah, Tel Medinah, Jera Supli, Mizisthah, Jayithah, and Abu-ghuroot, proving that this land must have once borne a dense population, and now possibly represents Beana, Chunduca, Chumana, Cæsa, Birande, Bethana, Thalme, Forthuda, Jamba, Rhajia, Rhalta, Chiriphe, and others merely mentioned by Ptolemy and Cellarius.

Waasut, the capital of the ancient province of Cascara, has lately been visited by two travellers, Lieutenant Ormsby and Captain Mignon; but neither appears to have discovered any remains worthy of notice. It consists of forty or fifty wretched houses, built of mud and fragments of brick taken from the old city, which last is strewed around in the shape of sand-covered hillocks, without a single object to give interest to the scene.

The next ruins that demand our attention are those of Seleucia and Ctesiphon or Ul Madayn, on opposite sides of the Tigris, nineteen miles below Bagdad. Of the first, little indeed is left to tell what it was, if we except part of the north and south walls, of great thickness, and built of unburned bricks, and an immense extent of mounds, covered with debris. Of Ctesiphon, besides a portion of the wall, which resembles that of Seleucia in fabric, there remains only one very remarkable object. It is known as the Tauk e Kesra, or the Arch of Khoosroo, and may be regarded as the façade of a very magnificent building that appears never to have been completed. It consists of a wall 284 feet long, rather more than 100 feet high, and nineteen feet

thick at the bottom, ornamented, not in very good taste, with four tiers of pilasters, having niches like windows rising above one another—the higher ones diminishing in height and increasing in numbers towards the top. In the centre there is an archway, which rises to a point, the apex of which is 101 feet from the ground, and of eighty feet span. This gives entrance to what has been a noble hall, 153 feet long, of which the arched roof remains in great part entire, though there are in it some extensive chasms. It is plastered and perforated with holes, from whence tradition tells that in the time of Khoosroo there hung a hundred silver lamps. These, no doubt, disappeared at the period when Ctesiphon was sacked by the Arabs; but there still remained a ring of yellow metal in the ceiling, near the centre of the arch, which tempted the cupidity of a pacha of Bagdad. He first caused his troops to fire at it with musket balls, which shattered the roof; but this expedient failing, he sent an Arab up who contrived to run a rope through the ring, and this being yoked to a number of buffaloes, it was at length torn down, and proved to be of simple brass.

There are also the remains of a fort, now intersected by the Tigris, called Kallah mal Kesra, in which are found broken sepulchral urns or jars; and, half an hour's march distant from the Tauk, there is a space of 1450 yards square, surrounded by walls of sun-dried bricks, in which are likewise seen shattered vases. It is called by the natives the Garden of Kesra or Khoosroo.

The next points of interest to the antiquary and geographer, particularly as connected with the celebrated retreat of the Ten Thousand, are the site of Opis and the line of the Median wall. That city is said by Xenophon to have stood on the northern side of the Physcus, where the stream was 100 feet broad, having a bridge over it; and we know from other sources that it was also on the Tigris. Now Dr. Ross, who made a journey to Samarra, the ruins of a Moslem city on the latter river, bounded by two branches of the Nahrawan canal, found the angle between the north-western bank of the Physcus and the left bank of the Tigris covered with very ancient mounds, which, in common with some other inquirers well informed on these subjects, he believes to be the remains of Opis. But Mr. Ainsworth, who conceives that the Tigris has shifted its bed a good

deal towards the northeast, looks for the ancient junction of it with the Athem farther west than the present point of union, where there are certain ruins called Babelin (the second Bâbel); and these he is inclined to regard as marking the site of the Opis recorded in the *Anabasis* and in the campaigns of Alexander.

Strabo maintains that the Median wall was to be found on the Tigris as high as the Opis; and such must in all probability have been the case, as, had it touched the river lower down, it would have cut through the Dijeil Canal, an ancient work, which has its derivation from that stream immediately below Samarra. According to Xenophon, it was said to extend twenty parasangs (about seventy miles) in length; and in the account of Julian's expedition, it is mentioned as originating at Macepracta. Now the distance from the point of junction of the Athem with the Tigris to Felugia, which represents the ancient Macepracta, is just about seventy miles; and both Dr. Ross, in his visits to that part of the country in 1836, and Lieutenant Lynch of the Euphrates expedition, examined a continuous mound or embankment which, there can be little doubt, is the remains of this celebrated wall. The former describes it as a single straight and solid mound, twenty-five long paces in thickness, and from thirty-five to forty feet high, running in a line from north-northeast ¼ east, to south-southwest ¼ west, as far in the latter direction as the eye can trace it, but cut off by the Dijeil Canal about half a mile from the point where he discovered it. On its western face there are bastions at every fifty-five paces, and on the same side a deep ditch twenty-seven yards broad. The Bedouins told him that it ran in the same line across the country till it touched two mounds named Ramelah, on the Euphrates, some hours above Felugia; and that in places far inland it is built of brick, in some points worn down to the level of the desert. Where Dr. Ross saw it, near the village of Jibbarah, it was constructed of the common pebbles of the country, imbedded in a tenacious lime cement. The Arab tradition is, that it was built by Nimrod to keep off the people of Nineveh, with whom he was at feud. The land in the vicinity presents numerous remains of ancient buildings; among which the doctor mentions particularly those of Istabolat as being of

considerable extent and very perfect.* Lynch confirms this account of the Median wall, along the side of which, he says, he galloped for more than an hour without finding any appearance of termination.†

This vicinity is thickly strewed with ancient ruins. The banks of the Athem, and Tigris, and the Nahrawan were also found by Ross to be crowded with the relics of extensive towns and cities; and among these, on the right bank of the Tigris, must be sought the Sittace of Xenophon. It was twenty parasangs below Opis, and fifteen stadia from the river; and Mr. Ainsworth conceives that he has discovered it in an extensive series of mounds and embankments, consisting of the usual materials, and stretching from "Sheriat el Beitha" westward, almost to Akkerkoof; from which, however, these works are for most part of the year separated by the overflow of the Euphrates.

The ruins of Samarra, the Sarra-manraa of Abulfeda, and the Labab, are extensive, and denote that it must have been a great city in the time of its prosperity, which was during the reign of the Caliph Motassem, its founder. The most remarkable specimen is an immense conical tower of brick, called the Malwiyah, upward of 100 feet in height;‡ to the top of which a man could ascend on horseback, by means of a spiral path running round its outside. It has also a stair in the interior. Close to it are the remains of a jameh or mosque, of great dimensions, to which the other is said to have served for the minaret.

It is a quadrangular building, 264 paces by 160, having walls eleven spans thick, with turrets at short intervals, and a large bastion at each corner. There are five doors in the largest and three in the smallest sides; and here, in the time of the caliphate, the whole population of Samarra used to assemble for prayer. There are also the remains of the caliph's palace, magnificent walls, arches, gates, subterranean chambers, and courts, built of brick and mortar, little of which, however, is perfect except the great entrance, consisting of a very lofty arch, with smaller ones on either side.

Besides these, there are Til Allee, a high, sloping mass of rubbish; a group of mounds named Kaf or Chaf, which the Arabs believe to be the abode of the seven sleepers,

* Journal of Geographical Society, vol. ix., p. 446. † Ibid., p. 473
‡ Rich considered it to be nearly 200 feet.

and of their dog, which is occasionally heard howling on a Friday night; and Giaoureah, or the palace of the infidels, a large assemblage of rubbish and brick, all of which are of a date far more ancient than the Mohammedan era.

At Gaim, six or seven miles south of Samarra, is seen a square pyramidal building of rough stone and mortar, from fifty to sixty feet in height, which marks the point of the lowest derivation of the Nahrawan Canal. Opposite to this, on the western bank of the Tigris, are Kadesia, a perfect heptagon fort, with bastions at every angle, and seventeen smaller ones, with a gate on each face, the distance from one bastion to another being ten or twelve yards. It is built of mud and sun-burned bricks, four inches thick, and the walls even now are twenty feet high. Around it the country is strewed with relics, as well as the banks of the Tigris on both sides. From a part of these ruins was taken the lower portion of a statue of black basalt in a sitting posture, resembling the figures at Persepolis, and which is now in the possession of Colonel Taylor, British resident at Bagdad. The Arabs say that the upper part of it is still in the water beneath the bank from whence the other fragment was dug.

At Kadesia there was formerly a great glass manufactory, the slag of which is scattered about in large hillocks, still affording crystals of almost every colour. The workmen are said to have been brought from Kadees, a village of Merve in Khorasan, from whence, also, is derived the name of the town in Mesopotamia.

About thirty miles north by west from Samarra lies Tecreet, which has been already noticed; and at two days' journey from thence are the ruins of Al Hadhr, the ancient Hatra, which have lately been twice visited at great personal risk by the indefatigable Doctor Ross, who thus describes them. They lie about thirty miles west by north of the ruin Kalah Sherkat, on the right bank of the Tigris, nearly ninety miles in a straight line north-northwest of Tecreet, and two from the western bank of the Tharthar River (the ancient Thirtha). They occupy a space of ground upward of a mile in diameter, enclosed by a circular wall of immense thickness, with square bastions or towers, at about sixty paces from each other, built of large regularly-cut stones. The upper part of the curtains have in most places been thrown down, along with some of the bastions; but

most of the latter are tolerably entire, having each vaulted chambers towards the city. Outside the wall is a broad and very deep ditch, now dry; and at the interval of 100 or 150 paces is a thick rampart, at present only a few feet high, which goes round the town. At some distance beyond the fortifications on the eastern and northern side stand two lofty mounds with square towers on them.

Nearly in the centre of the town stands a quadrangle, enclosed by a strong thick wall, the sides of which, 300 paces each, face the four cardinal points, and are defended, like the exterior wall, with bastions. This square is intersected in the centre by a range of ruinous buildings, comprising a maze of chambers, gateways, and a single pillar, reduced to thirty feet in height. Between these edifices and the eastern wall the ground is clear; but the space towards the west is partly occupied by a huge pile of building fronting the east, and part of a wing facing the north. The ground story of these alone remains perfect, and consists of a series of vaulted halls of two sizes, from thirty to sixty feet in height, and above twelve in breadth. The whole, like every other part of the city, is built of a brownish-gray limestone, each piece being so closely fitted in its place, that, if cement has been used, it cannot be seen; and almost every one composing the great pile has cut on it one or more letters, seemingly the builder's marks. The chambers are adorned with variously sculptured work, each stone at the spring of the arch having carved on it a human bust in high relief. Others bear figures of females, apparently in the air, with crossed feet and loose flying robes, and cornices of foliage and other devices beneath. In one chamber there is a line of eight bulls with human heads; and in others, griffons, serpents, and other animals, some of which, Ross thinks, bear evidence of having been touched by a Greek or Roman chisel.

The dwelling-houses appear to have been confined to the western part of the city; and, though now merely mounds and hillocks, the doctor believes that an attentive examination might ascertain the site of every street and square. A canal crosses the whole eastward of the central space; and the dreary aspect of certain detached buildings scattered thickly beyond it led him to conclude that it was the Necropolis. He looked eagerly for the statues said by the Arabs to exist here, but could discover

none; and when he desired a Bedouin to point him out the statue of the woman milking a cow, which had been particularly mentioned, he led him without hesitation to the bull monsters just described. Hence he doubts greatly the existence of any figures here, at least above ground.*

This Hatra appears to have been held during the wars between the Romans and Parthians by an Arab chief, called by the writers of those days Barsuma, who took part with the latter against the invaders. Built upon a mountain and strongly fortified, it is said to have resisted the attacks of Trajan and Severus. According to report, it rose to a degree of wealth and power that attracted the cupidity of the last of those emperors, who led an army against it; but, though he spared no means for reducing it to subjection, his exertions proved vain. It probably owed its riches to commerce, being, like Palmyra, an entrepôt in the midst of a wide desert.

When Niebuhr passed this way, he was assured by some Arabs of the Tai tribe, that among the ruins of Al Hadr there are to be found multitudes of petrified bodies; and they even pretended to have themselves seen those of muftis, cadis, women, and children in every possible attitude, who, according to the tradition of the place, had all been turned into stone in a single night. It is possible, as the traveller suggests, that this may be an exaggerated account of sculptures which might be well worthy of a visit.

The neighbourhood of Felugia, where is found the southern termination of the Median wall, abounds also in vestiges of ancient habitations; the remains, we presume, of the Perisaboras of Julian's expedition, or Ancobar of Ptolemy. Nor can there be any doubt that the wild realm of Mesopotamia, from this wall to the line of the Khabour, would in like manner, if explored, prove fertile in discoveries indicative of a teeming population wherever the soil admitted of culture: but as yet no traveller has had opportunity, or been tempted to brave the perils of the Arabs and the desert, in order to enter upon this new field of enterprise.

* Journal of Geographical Society, vol. ix., p. 467–470.

CHAPTER VIII.

Nineveh and its Environs.

Ancient Nineveh nowhere particularly described in Sacred Writ.—Account of by Diodorus.—Its Walls.—Incidentally mentioned by Herodotus.—By the Prophets Jonah and Nahum as an exceedingly great and profligate City.—Mr. Rich's Account of its Ruins.—Visible Remains.—Tel Koyunjuk.—Sepulchral Chamber and Inscription, &c.—Nebbi Yunus.—Inscribed Gypsum—And Antiques.—Mosque in Memory of the Prophet Jonah.—Conjectures.—Strabo's Account of the City's Extent.—Mounds of Yaremjee, Zembil Tepessi, &c.—Vestiges not numerous.—Mounds of Nimrod or Al Athur.—Larissa of Xenophon?—Resin?—Remains.—Pyramid.—Mr. Rich's Voyages down the Tigris to Bagdad.—Ancient Sites on the Banks.—His Visit to Mar Mattei.—Villages of Yezidees and Jacobite Christians.—Ain u Sofra.—Yezidees.—Their Pope.—Some Particulars of their Faith and Worship.—Position, Appearance, and Description of the Convent.—History.—Establishment.—View from its Terrace.—Ras ul Ain.—Excursion to Rabban Hormuzd—And Al Kosh.—Character of the Yezidees.—Al Kosh.—Birth and Burial place of the Prophet Nahum.—Ascent to, and Appearance of the Convent of Rabban Hormuzd.—Establishment.—Aspect of the Priests and Monks.—Discipline.—Period of Founding.—Grottoes.—Manuscripts.—Destroyed.—Chaldean Villages populous.—Convent of Mar Elias.—Churches of Mars Toma and Mar Shemaoon.

The principal places of Upper Mesopotamia have already been mentioned, and we shall afterward take an opportunity of adverting to the antiquities they contain, when describing the country from the accounts of travellers who have lately visited it. We shall act in like manner with regard to Assyria; but there is one object in that region which, though now its remains are almost utterly obliterated, demands more than a passing notice, as being associated with our earliest religious impressions, and forming a prominent point in the ancient annals of the East: we mean the capital of Asshur, "Nineveh, that great city."

It is remarkable that neither in sacred nor profane history have we any very particular description of Nineveh. In the former, indeed, it is often spoke of as "an exceeding great city of three days' journey;" but this description is incidentally introduced, and its name, for the most part, is

only coupled with denunciations of vengeance for its wickedness. Neither in the latter have we anywhere so elaborate an account of it as is given of Babylon. Diodorus, indeed, informs us that it was still larger than this other magnificent capital, inasmuch as it was an oblong square of 480 stadia in circumference. He adds that it was surrounded by a wall a hundred feet in height; so broad that three chariots might conveniently drive abreast upon its summit; and defended by 1500 towers, each rising to double the height of the wall. But nothing farther is stated; and the accuracy even of this detail may be doubted, when proceeding from an historian who mistakes so grossly as to place the capital of Assyria upon the *Euphrates* instead of the *Tigris*. Thus, though Nineveh is mentioned casually by several authors, including Herodotus, who says that he means to return to the subject, but whose work upon it, if he ever wrote one, has not reached our times, we in truth know nothing more than what we gather from the books of the prophets Jonah and Nahum, that it was "an exceeding great city;" and, like most large cities in those days, so sunk in profligacy and crime as to excite the wrath of the Almighty.

That the indignation of Heaven did at length burst on its devoted head, we know from the history which relates its overthrow; and the account furnished by Mr. Rich,* who visited its site, and spent many days in examining its remains, affords pregnant proof of the complete fulfilment of all the denunciations we meet with in the Sacred Volume.

The ruins of Nineveh, which are situated opposite to the modern town of Mosul, are comprehended chiefly in an oblong enclosure, narrowing greatly towards its southern end, and extending about four miles in length by two in breadth. It is irregularly intersected by the Khausser rivulet, and contains two principal mounds, the one called Tel Koyunjuk, and the other Nebbi Yunus. There are beyond this enclosed space, to the eastward, some long banks like ramparts; and several small hillocks scattered around at greater or less distances in the vicinity. These elevations are all clothed with turf, or have their summits cultivated; so that an inexperienced eye could not distinguish

* Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, &c., 2 vols. 8vo, London, 1836.

them from natural ground. On the first mentioned of them there is a small village, and on the second has been erected a mosque of considerable size, which covers the supposed tomb of the prophet Jonah, and also a diminutive town, consisting of about 300 indifferent houses, which, however, do not occupy its whole surface.

The Tel Koyunjuk, according to Mr. Rich, is in height forty-three feet, and 7691 in circumference; of rather an irregular form, approaching to oval; its top nearly flat; its sides very steep; and its angles quite unmarked by remains of turret or bastion; nor does it bear the appearance of having ever been much higher than it now is. There are, however, evidences of its having been built upon, at least round the edges; and stones and bricks are ploughed up on all hands. At a place where it had been dug into, he observed masonry of coarse stone and mortar, and a piece of the same rock, shaped like the capital of a column, without carving. A flooring or pavement, too, of small stones rammed down with earth, was seen on many parts of its surface; and fragments of pottery, as well as bricks with bitumen adhering to them, were found among the debris. While he was there, a piece of the finest kind of pottery was excavated, covered with beautiful cuneiform writing, and quite resembling the large cylinders of that substance occasionally seen at Babylon.

Mr. Rich also mentions that, while a certain Turk was digging for stones in this very mound, his workmen brought to light a sepulchral chamber, in which was an inscription; and among fragments of bone and rubbish, a woman's ankle-ornament of silver, covered with turquoise-coloured rust; another, called a *hezil*, of gold, made for a child; a bracelet of gold beads, quite perfect; and some pieces of engraved agate. But the gold and silver were melted down, the agates thrown away, and the chamber broken up by the Mussulman traveller. The soft parts of this mound alone are subjected to the plough.

The one called Nebbi Yunus is estimated by Mr. Rich to be about fifty feet high in the loftiest part; its length from east to west, 431 feet; and its breadth from north to south, 355. On being dug deeply into, bricks and fragments of pottery and gypsum, covered with cuneiform writing, are found in abundance, testifying to the antiquity as well as the artificial character of the mound. Some of those pie-

ces of inscribed gypsum were seen built into the walls of houses; and one particularly, in a small room occupied by the women of a villager, was said to be several yards long, but, except about three feet of it, had all been plastered over with mud. The stone is rendered more interesting by the fact that, having been discovered in its original position while the cottage was in building, it was permitted to remain just as it was; so that the characters are seen in their proper light. Certain narrow, dark, and vaulted passages, with apertures leading into one another, have been found on the eastern side of the court of the mosque. They appeared as if intended for the reception of dead bodies, and were declared to be very ancient.

It is in this mound that the best and most curious antiques have been discovered. A remarkable little stone chair, in Mr. Rich's possession, was dug up here, with several inscribed bricks and cylinders.

The mosque of Nebbi Yunus, which is a considerable building with a ribbed conical dome, occupies the site of a Christian monastery that was erected to commemorate the preaching of Jonah; but there appears to be no ground whatever for the belief that it covers his tomb.

The vestiges of building within the enclosure, besides Nebbi Yunus and Tel Koyunjuk, our author informs us, are but slight; and he gives it as his opinion that the ground thus enclosed contained merely the citadel or royal palace, or both perhaps, while, if we are to believe either the accounts of ancient geographers or the words of Sacred Writ, the town may, and indeed must, have extended on all sides to a great distance; for Strabo says it occupied the whole space between the Tigris and the Lycus; and in Scripture it is declared to be a "city of three days' journey." Accordingly, our countryman, in his researches around, perceived numerous traces of building of the same character as that within its limits; such are the mounds of Yaremjee, nearly four miles to the south; of Zembil Tepessi, to the southeast; and the vestiges observed on the way northward to the Convent of St. George.

We have here given a summary of the observations and researches on the site of Nineveh made by the English resident. It is a scene, as may be gathered even from our abridgment, which speaks rather to the feelings than to the senses; for there is nothing grand or sublime to strike the

eye. There is not there the majestic vastness of the Pyramids, nor the lonely grandeur of the "Throne of Jemshid," nor even the scathed and ghastly desolation of Babylon, to impress the imagination. The dust of Nineveh rests beneath a green and smiling sod; but, nevertheless, those lowly mounds contain all that remains of the second city of the patriarchal world; of that great capital which, sinful as were its people, the Almighty, once at least, in his mercy spared: and who is there that could pass them by with indifference?

About six caravan hours below those ruins and the city of Mosul are found the vestiges of an ancient place, called Nimrod by some of the inhabitants (according to Mr. Rich, regarded as Nimrod's own city), and named by others Al Athur or Asshur, from which the whole country received its appellation. That gentleman regarded it as the Larissa of Xenophon; and there appears some grounds for supposing that it may represent the Resin of the book of Genesis, for Al Resin, that is, Resin with the Arabic article affixed, might by the Greeks be easily transmuted into Larissa. The principal remains found here are a pyramidal mount of 144 feet in height, which forms the northwest angle of a flat mound, of about 1000 feet north and south by 514 east and west. The area of this platform is somewhat depressed below the height of the sides, giving the idea of a wall having surrounded them. The pyramid is steep, and the top very small; but its base measured upward of 700 feet in circumference. At the western side of this were found marks of concrete buildings, such as had been seen at Nineveh; and fragments of bricks with cuneiform inscriptions were scattered about. They were thicker than those of Babylon. Both to the north and east there were ruins to be traced; and the hills on the opposite side were interspersed with mounds. The country was well cultivated, and sprinkled with villages, one of which still bears the name of Nimrod, though sometimes called Deraweish.

Mr. Rich sailed down the Tigris from Mosul to Bagdad on a kellek or raft, one of the primitive boats of the country, described by Herodotus as formed of pieces of wood supported upon inflated skins. On his way he saw numerous sites, indicated by the usual mounds and heaps. Among the principal of these were Keshaf, at the mouth of

the Zab, supposed to be Haditha of the ancient geographers, Tel Sittcih, Tel Geloos, Mekook, Toprak Kalaa or Kalaat ul Shirgath,* Tecreet, Tel el Meheji, Samarra, Kadesia, and others which we have already mentioned.

While remaining at Mosul, he was indefatigable in examining the neighbourhood, and discovered many objects worthy of attention, among which we may include the convent of Mar Mattei, the Chaldean town of Al Kosh, and the convent of Rabban Hormuzd.

The convent of Mar Mattei or Sheik Muttee is situated on a mountain about twenty-five miles east of Mosul; and Mr. Rich, having passed through the alluvial tract in which the ruins of Nineveh are situated, rode over an undulating country to Baasheka, a village of Yezidees and Jacobite Christians, imbosomed in olive-trees. The oil from this and a similar wood surrounding Baazani chiefly supplies the city of Mosul, and is much used in the manufacture of soap. Baasheka is situated just in front of a defile, where there is a fountain that appears to be an object of veneration to the Yezidees, who in spring repair thither, and to another called by them Ain u Sofra, to make merry, offer sacrifices, play at various games, and to get drunk. "The Yezids," it is remarked, "seemingly have Christianity, or some barbarous remains of it, among them. They admit baptism and circumcision; believe in the metempsychosis; never say 'such a one is dead,' but that 'he is changed;' never enter a Christian church without kissing the threshold and putting off their shoes. Their principal burying-place is at Bozan, a village at the foot of the mountain of Rabban Hormuzd, and bodies are carried there from all parts. It was formerly a Christian village with a monastery.

"The Khan of Sheik Khan or Baadli is the pope of the Yezids. He is descended from the family of the Ommiades, and is esteemed the Emir Hadji of the Yezids. Their great place of pilgrimage is at Sheik Adi, three hours distant in the mountains beyond Sheik Khan, and it is said† to have been a Christian monastery. The church, conventicle, or whatever it may be called, is said to resemble that at Jerusalem, every different tribe of Yezids having its own

* Or Shirkat, near Al Hadhr.

† A note informs us that it in reality was a Christian church, dedicated to St. Thaddeus.

separate station in it. Their peer or sheik reads prayers, every one at intervals crying out 'amen;' and this is the whole of their worship. It is true that they pay adoration, or at least a sort of worship, to Mellek Taous, the figure of a bird placed on a kind of candlestick.* They will not spit into the fire, or blow out a candle with their breaths. When the sun just appears above the horizon, they salute it with three prostrations. When they are taxed by the Christians and Turks with having no books, they say it is because God has so peculiarly enlightened their minds as to render books and a written law unnecessary. Several mounds of ancient debris were seen in the country around this village."†

Next day, proceeding by a path through defiles and over hills, Mr. Rich reached the convent, which is situated on the mountain of Makloube, overlooking the course of the Bumadus or Ghazir-su, and to which he ascended by a steep path winding up the face of a precipice. This edifice, he observes, "has much the appearance of a stronghold, being composed of two large towers, or buildings resembling towers, at each extremity, united by a common wall. Had this curtain been embattled, and the wall a little thicker, it would pass for a very tolerable baron's castle of the fourteenth century. It is situated on the very edge of the precipice, and the bare rock rises immediately behind it, in which, indeed, are ensconced many chambers and parts of the structure. It is, in short, built in the abrupt face of the mountain, like a martin's nest; and the general plan is not very easy to describe. It consists principally of the aforesaid towers, and two courts between them, with an infinity of little detached holes, nooks, and chambers; but, from a great many of them now being in ruins, it is evident that the whole establishment must at one time have been much more considerable. Indeed, it formerly seems to have been a place of strength, for Tamerlane took it by storm. He assaulted it from the eastern side of the mountain, and entered just above its southeast angle. There were then works built on the rock, which is now unprotected, and commands it. The present habitable part, and the church, which is in the southeast angle,

* It is the figure of a cock, and is produced but once a year for the purpose of worship.

† Rich's Koordistan, vol. ii., p. 69, 70.

have been recently fitted up under the protection of the Pacha of Mosul's brother, Hajee Osman Bey; but the skeleton of this part of the design seems to have been preserved. In the highest part of the enclosure up the hill are seen some lines of large stones, part of the original building. This convent belongs to the Jacobites, and the abbot is always a matran or bishop. The present incumbent is an old man; and, besides himself, he has only one monk, and a lad who is educating for the priesthood. According to the abbot Matran Mousa, the convent was founded in 334 A.D. by Mar Mattei, a saint, and companion of St. George, who fled from the persecution of Diocletian, and took refuge here. Having by his prayers healed the daughter, named Havla, of the King of the Assyrians, he obtained permission to build this convent. But this, to the best of my recollection, is recorded in Assemanni in a much more authentic manner.*

"The famous Gregory Bar Hebræus or Abul Faraj is buried here.

"From the terrace of the south tower, where we are lodged, we have a noble and extended view, comprising the whole of Alexander's operations, from the passage of the Tigris to the arrival at Arbela after the battle of Gaugamela. The Bumadus meanders at the foot or southern extremity of this mountain, and I am now told it rises just below Amadieh. I can trace the Zab plainly."†

From this elevated position the geographical lines of the country were easily comprehended. The mountains of Accra, with the loftier peaks of Zagros rising behind them, are plainly visible in the northeast; and a place is mentioned, called Ras ul Ain—the head of the waters‡—an old convent at the farther extremity of the plain of Naokor, through which flows the Ghazir-su. In the neighbourhood of this establishment there were found several caves and grottoes, partly natural and partly artificial, the interior of which contained many inscriptions in the Stranghelo or old Syriac character, in which the more ancient manuscripts are written.

* According to Assemanni, it was founded, together with one to St. Jonah, in the time of Shapour, king of Persia, and was called Chuchta.

† Rich's Koordistan, vol. ii., p. 73–76.

‡ Ras ul Ain is a common name for such localities. Query: Can the Ras ul Ain of Mesopotamia (the ancient Ressaina) have any pretensions to being the Resin of Asshur or Nimrod?

Leaving this place, Mr. Rich proceeded to the town of Al Kosh and the convent of Rabban Hormuzd, situated in a range of subordinate hills in front of the great Kurdish Mountains. Crossing the ridge which divides the valleys of the Gomel and the Khausser, he passed the villages of Seid Khan, Sirej Khan, and Girghiaour to Al Kosh. The Yezid capital Baadli, the residence of Meer Sheik Khan, a chief of very ancient family, and recognised as head of all the Yezidees, lay only three hours distant northeast of Sirej Khan, where he halted for a night. The country was inhabited by Kurds and Yezidees; and at that village he and his followers were entertained by the performance of a musician who played them many national airs. He speaks of the latter people in terms of high praise. "From what I have seen and heard of the Yezids," says he, "they seem lively, brave, hospitable, and good-humoured. They were delighted at this village to see us, and entertained our people most hospitably. Under the British government much might be made of them."*

The country now became broken and confused, consisting of ravines, bare ridges of crumbling sandstone, with only here and there a patch of vegetation where the soil admitted of it; and it is observed that the Mosul territory appeared well cultivated wherever it was susceptible of improvement. After ascending for some time, a gentle descent brought the party close to Al Kosh, a little way up the mountain, having on their right a fine extensive plain, very well improved and studded with villages. Baadli, which is nine miles distant, under the bare hills, near a defile whence the Gomel issues, is situated in the territory of Amadieh. On the left, while descending, was seen a large artificial mound, which gives its name, Girghiaour (the infidel's hillock), to the place; and several other such tumuli of greater or less size were scattered about. Of Al Kosh, which is entirely a Chaldean town, Mr. Rich tells us but little, as he did not visit it, choosing to proceed at once to the convent of Rabban Hormuzd. From his observations, that the Al Koshites are a very stout and independent class of men, who can muster about 400 musketeers, we gather that it is not either large or populous; and perhaps it may derive its chief interest from having been the birth and burial place of the Prophet Nahum,

* Vol. ii., p. 87.

"the El Koshite," who was of a Jewish family that resided here during the captivity of Nineveh. Israelites from all parts come on pilgrimage to his tomb.

Having passed very near this town, the party turned to the right, where, about a mile higher up, in a rocky defile or opening in the mountains, was the convent, and which from thence wore a most imposing appearance. "Nothing," it is remarked, "was clearly distinguishable but a heavy square building of a dusky red colour, hanging quite over a precipice, like some lama pagoda. The dark clouds rolled over the summit of the mountain almost down to the convent, and greatly increased the gloominess of its aspect, and its apparent height. We seemed to be retreating from the world, and entering on some wild and untried state of existence, when we found ourselves in the rocky strait by which it is approached. The situation appeared to be well chosen for devotion, but devotion of a savage and gloomy character. The hills gradually rose very soon after the slope had terminated. An immense torrent, now dry, had brought down prodigious fragments of rock. Keeping along its edge, we reached, at eleven o'clock, the entrance of the defile along a rocky and rough road. This defile expands, and scoops out the mountain into a kind of wild amphitheatre, in which, not half way up, the convent is situated. It was only the latter part of the road which was very steep. The red building we had seen from afar was part of a church, or, rather, churches, there being several together. All the amphitheatre, from the top to the bottom, is full of little caves and grottoes, those near the church, and extending up the rock far above it, being appropriated to the use of the monks, of whom there are fifty, only four or five of whom are priests. Each monk has a separate cell, and the communications between them are by little terraces. The rocks are craggy and broken, and of fine harmonious tints, being of freestone, of which the church is built. It stands on a platform elevated from the precipice; but very little of the ancient fabric remains.

"We arrived at half past eleven. We were accommodated in rather an airy lodging, in a kind of sacristy or chapel adjoining the church. Our people established themselves as well as they could in the surrounding caves, and the horses we sent back to the village.

"In the afternoon I went to vespers. The congregation of rustic, dark-looking monks, together with the gloominess and simplicity of the church—which is merely a narrow arched or vaulted room, with no light but what is admitted from the small dome—might well remind one of the solitude of St. Saba. Indeed, the monks were not less Thebaid in their appearance, being dusky-looking men, clothed in the coarsest manner like peasants, but more sombre in their colours, their gown being of a dark blue or black canvass, with a common abba or Arab cloak of brown woollen over it. On their heads they wear a small scull-cap of brown felt, with a black handkerchief tied round it. The priests are rather better clothed in black dresses, with black turbans on their heads. The monks are of all trades—weavers, tailors, smiths, carpenters, and masons, so that the wants of the convent are entirely supplied by the convent itself. Their wants are, indeed, very few, the order being that of St. Anthony, and very rigorous in its observances. The monks never eat meat except at Christmas and Easter. Sometimes, indeed, if any of their friends bring them a little as a present, they are not forbidden to eat it; but no meat is provided for the convent. The daily food is some boiled wheat and bread, and even this in small quantities. Wine and spirits are altogether prohibited; and none but the treasurer is allowed to touch money." To this account the editor adds in a note, that "the monks live separately and alone in their cells when not employed at their work, and are forbidden to talk to one another. A bell summons them to church several times a day; besides which, they meet in the church at midnight for prayer; again at daybreak; and at sunset, when they retire to their cells without fire or candle. Some of these cells are far from the others, in very lonely situations, high up the mountains, in steep places, and look difficult to get at by day; how much more so in dark and stormy nights! They are surrounded by wild, plundering tribes of Kurds, who might come down and murder them in their different retreats, without their cries for help being heard; but their poverty preserves them from such attacks. There were several young men among them, who had retired here, being, as they told us, weary of the world, and hoping to find rest in this solitude, and acceptance with God through religious exercises of a painful and

mortifying nature. They did not look happy or healthy, and we are told they die young."*

The monastery was founded, according to the abbot's account, by Tomarsa, patriarch of the Chaldeans at Seleucia or Ctesiphon, between A.D. 384 and 392. Assemanni† says that Rabban Hormuzd, the bishop, was martyred about the thirty-sixth year of the persecution, and the sixty-sixth of the reign of Shapour; and it appears that John Sulaca, who was ordained Patriarch of the Chaldeans at Rome in 377, lived at the monastery of Rabban, which seems to have then consisted of fifty monks. Rabban Hormuzd is said to have been afterward the residence of the Nestorian bishop, the Catholic-Chaldean one residing at Diarbekr.‡

This Hormuzd, who is reported to have been the son of a king of Persia, and put to death for his faith, is the grand national saint of the Chaldeans, whether Nestorian or Catholic. His body was brought from Persia and deposited here.

"The quantity of caves and little grottoes all over the hollow of the mountain or rocky amphitheatre," continues the traveller, "is quite surprising. An earthquake filled a great many of them, and the natural ruin and crumbling down of the mountain has also obliterated multitudes. The monks say they frequently discover grottoes in clearing away rubbish. It is not likely that this immense number of grottoes, dispersed at all heights and distances, should have been purposely constructed by the founder of the church; yet that the greater part cannot be natural is quite evident on the slightest inspection. Some may possibly have been made in cutting stone; but this cannot be the case with by far the greater number, as their form testifies, being small, oven-like excavations, with a little aperture, and sometimes two, for a door and a window. One or two of those which I entered had two stone beds or niches in the wall, exactly as if they had been intended for the reception of dead bodies, like those at Kufri. They may all at one time have served for this, and this immense amphitheatre have been no more than a dakhmeh or burying-place of the old Persians. Some of the lost Syriac

* Rich's Koordistan, vol. ii., p. 90–93. † Vol. i., p. 525.

‡ Rich's Koordistan, vol. ii., p. 94, with note to ditto · and Assemanni, vol. i., p. 528, note.

and Chaldean manuscripts would in all probability have thrown light upon this curious place. There were formerly kept in this convent about 500 volumes of old Stranghelo manuscripts on vellum; but they were thrown together in an old vault on the side of the hill, a part of which was carried away by a torrent, and the books, being damaged, were deemed of no farther value, and, consequently, were torn up and thrown about. Some scattered leaves were shown to me, which were unquestionably of the highest antiquity. Manuscripts are fast perishing in the East, and it is almost the duty of a traveller to rescue as many as he can from destruction."*

On their way back to Mosul, Mr. Rich and his party passed through Teliskof, that is to say, "the Bishop's Mount," where there are some nuns, but no monastery. These live in the houses of their parents or relations, as they do at Al Kosk, there being no female establishment. Prodigious crowds of Chaldean Catholics assembled to see the strangers, taking pleasure, as it seemed, in beholding a Christian coming among them with something like the appearance and attributes of power.

These villages are described as large and populous. The Kiahya of Tel Keif, a town wholly inhabited by that people, informed our countryman that it contained a thousand houses, in some of which were thirty souls. This may be overrated; but it was certainly crowded with people, who, like most of the race, were dirty, ill favoured, and dark complexioned, and all much addicted to the use of strong liquors.

On his return to Mosul, the traveller visited the remains of the convent of Mar Elias near the town, and the churches of Mar Toma and Mar Shemaoon Sava within it. The former is now a heap of ruins, having been destroyed by Nadir Shah, but still exhibiting some interesting remains. It was founded, according to Assemanni, in the latter end of the sixth century. The church of Mar Toma is unquestionably ancient, and is divided into a centre and two aisles by three heavy-pointed but obtuse arches, supported by octagonal piers. The great door of the sanctuary was surrounded by a border of carved work in marble, containing figures of Christ and the twelve apostles in medallions,

* Rich's Koordistan, vol. ii., p. 94–96.

with twisted scroll-work. Mr. Rich discovered a stone, which, on examination, proved to be adorned with an inscription in flowered Arabic letters of the age of the Sahibs, containing the very chapter of the Koran particularly directed against Christians. "So here," he observes, "had these poor people been devoutly rubbing their foreheads against a monument, of which, had they known its import, they would have had the greatest horror and detestation. I believe the archbishop gave orders for its removal from its present place." The other church is very ancient, and, like that of Rabban Hormuzd, consists of a single room.

CHAPTER IX.

Subsequent History of Mesopotamia and Assyria.

Rennell's Opinion of Xenophon's Retreat.—Advance of Cyrus.—Battle of Cunaxa, and Death of Cyrus.—Truce between the Greek Generals and the King.—The former advance to the Tigris, and cross it at Sittace.—Their March to Opis—And to the Banks of the Zab.—Treachery of Tissaphernes.—Clearchus and other Officers put to Death.—Farther Attempts at Treachery.—Defeated by the Prudence of the Grecian Officers.—Xenophon appointed to the Command.—The Greeks cross the Zab.—Are assailed by Mithradates.—Arrangements for repulsing the Enemy's light Troops.—March to Larissa—To Mespila.—Struggles during their Progress to the Carduchian Mountains.—Resolve to ascend them in Preference to crossing the River.—Are resolutely opposed by the Carduchians.—Abandon their useless Slaves and Baggage.—Difficulties of the Ascent.—Severe Contests with the Enemy—And Losses.—Cross the Centrites, and pass into Armenia.—Change of Dynasty.—Battle of Arbela.—The Seleucidæ.—Arsacidæ.—Appearance of the Romans in Mesopotamia.—Reduced to a Roman Province.—First Expedition of Crassus.—Embassy from Orodes.—The Romans driven out by the Parthians.—Second Expedition of Crassus—Advice of the King of Armenia.—Treachery of Abgarus—Who conducts them into the Deserts of Charræ.—Infatuation of Crassus.—His Army attacked by Surenas.—His Son slain.—The Romans forced to retreat with great Loss to Charræ.—Again betrayed and surrounded.—Crassus forced by the Legionaries to negotiate.—Is slain during an Interview with Surenas.—The Army destroyed.—Reflections on the Conduct of Xenophon and Crassus.

Although the history of these provinces, as the seat of a separate nation, undoubtedly terminates with the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, yet their claim to attention cannot be held to have ceased with their independent exist-

ence. On the contrary, it will be found that they long continued to be the theatre of the most remarkable events, and have, in point of fact, been at all times the battle-field on which the empire of the East has been contended for and won. We shall therefore present our readers with a short sketch of the changes they have witnessed, and briefly describe some of the more important occurrences of which they have been the scene.

The first of these which we shall notice is an exploit that has been pronounced by a high authority* to be "one of the most splendid of all the military events that have been recorded in ancient history"—we mean the retreat of Xenophon with his Ten Thousand Greeks; which, as is well known, arose out of an unsuccessful effort of the younger Cyrus to dispute the throne of Persia with his brother Artaxerxes Mnemon. Both these princes were sons of Darius Ochus, by his queen Parysatis, who, preferring the younger to the elder, sought to secure for him the succession. Failing in this, she induced him to conspire against the life of the lawful heir, and finally laboured to protect him from the consequences of his unsuccessful attempts. Cyrus, who retired from court to his government in Asia Minor, smarting under disgrace and disappointment, resolved on revenge. In order to achieve this, he maintained an intercourse with the Grecian states on the opposite side of the Bosphorus, and, having presented Clearchus, a banished Lecedæmonian, with large sums of money, succeeded, chiefly through his influence, in levying an army of 12,800 Greeks, at the head of which, and 100,000 natives, he advanced towards Persia in the year B.C. 401, in order to pull Artaxerxes from his throne.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon his progress from Sardis, whence he commenced his march, to the borders of Mesopotamia, nor on the difficulties he experienced in persuading his Western mercenaries to proceed against the great king his brother. It is sufficient to state that, having reached Myriandrus, in the Gulf of Scanderoon, he marched to Thapsacus, a distance of sixty-five parasangs, or about 260 miles, in twelve days, crossing in his route the rivers Chalus and Daradax, the latter of which is said to be 100 feet broad at its source, and seems to correspond

* The late Major Rennell.

to the Fountain of Fay mentioned by Rennell,* having in its vicinity the palace of Belesis, formerly governor of Syria. That town, according to the same author, who agrees with D'Anville, is identified with El Der, situated a little above the mouth of the Khabour. But if Beles represents Barbalissus, the former must be looked for higher up; and recent investigations lead to the belief that it stood some distance above Racca, on the right bank of the river: a position which will agree with the subsequent nine days' march of fifty parasangs to the River Araxes or Khabour. From Thapsacus, where they crossed the Euphrates, the account of their march to the Pylæ or Gates is very short. These passes are by most authorities placed at the termination of the hilly tract below Hit, which probably represented the Caramande mentioned by Xenophon.

From the Pylæ, Cyrus proceeded through the country of Babylonia to meet the army of his rival, who had advanced to oppose him. That he expected not to conquer without a struggle is known from the reply which he made to Clearchus, who asked him if he believed the king would hazard a battle. "Certainly," said he, "if he is the son of Darius and Parysatis, and my brother, I shall never obtain all this without a stroke;" and, accordingly, both Greeks and barbarians prepared themselves for fighting. They had need of all their resolution; for Xenophon states the reputed number of the Persian host at 1,200,000 men, and 200 scythe-armed chariots, besides 6000 horse.

Cyrus, having reviewed his troops, which consisted of 10,400 heavy-armed Greeks, and 2400 targeteers, with 100,000 barbarians, and twenty scythe-armed chariots, marched three parasangs in order of battle, expecting the enemy would fight that day; but the policy of Artaxerxes seems rather to have been to embarrass than overwhelm his opponent, for he caused a trench to be dug near the Euphrates by way of fortification, leaving, however, a narrow pass through which the invading army were permitted to pass unopposed. This would appear to have been done in order to throw Cyrus off his guard; and we accordingly find that prince riding on the third day in his car, his soldiers having left their ranks, and many of them laid their weapons upon sumpter horses or wagons, when Pa-

* Illustrations of the History of the Expedition of Cyrus, &c., 4to, London, 1816, p. 68.

tagyas, a Persian in his confidence, rode up at full speed, and informed him that the king was actually at hand, marching in regular order. This news causing an immediate bustle, the men ran to their arms, and prepared for action. It was the afternoon, however, before "a dust like a white cloud appeared, which soon spread itself like darkness over the plain. When they drew nearer, the brazen armour flashed, and their spears and ranks appeared, having on their left a body of horse, armed in white corslets (said to be commanded by Tissaphernes), and followed by those with Persian bucklers, besides heavy-armed men with wooden shields reaching down to their feet (said to be Egyptians), and other horse and archers, all which marched according to their respective countries, each nation being drawn up in a solid oblong square; and before them were disposed, at a considerable distance from one another, chariots armed with scythes, fixed aslant at the axletrees, with others under the body of the chariot pointing downward, that so they might cut asunder everything they encountered, by driving them among the ranks of the Greeks to break them. But it now appeared that Cyrus was greatly mistaken when he exhorted the Greeks to withstand the shouts of the barbarians, for they did not come on with cries, but as silently and quietly as possible, and in an equal and slow march.

"Here Cyrus, riding along the ranks with Pigres the interpreter and three or four others, commanded Clearchus to bring his men opposite to the centre of the enemy (because the king was there), saying, 'If we break that, our work is done;' but the latter, observing their position, and understanding that the king was beyond the left wing of the Greek army (for his majesty was so much superior in numbers, that, when he stood in the centre of his own army, he was beyond the left wing of that of his brother), would not be prevailed on to withdraw his right from the river, fearing to be surrounded on both sides, but answered that he would take care all should go well.

"Now the barbarians came regularly on, and the Greek army standing on the same ground, the ranks were formed as the men arrived. In the mean time, Cyrus, riding at a small distance before the ranks, surveying both the enemy's army and his own, was observed by Xenophon, an Athenian, who rode up to him, and asked whether he

had anything to command. The prince, stopping his horse, ordered him to let them all know that the sacrifice and victims promised success. While he was saying this, he heard a noise running through the ranks, and asked him what it meant. Xenophon answered that the word was now giving for the second time. Cyrus, wondering who should give it, demanded what the word was. The other replied, 'Jupiter the Preserver, and Victory;' Cyrus rejoined, 'I accept it: let that be the word;' after which he immediately returned to his post; and the two armies being now within three or four stadia of each other, the Greeks sung the Pæan, and began to advance against the enemy; but the motion occasioning a small fluctuation in the line of battle, those who were left behind hastened their march, and at once gave a general shout, as their custom is when they invoke the God of War; and all ran forward, striking their shields with their pikes (as some say) to frighten the enemy's horses, so that, before the barbarians came within reach of their darts, they turned their horses and fled; but the Greeks pursued them as fast as they could, calling out to one another not to run, but to follow in their ranks. Some of the chariots were borne through their own people without their charioteers, others through the Greeks, some of whom, seeing them coming, divided, while others, being amazed, like spectators in the hippodrome, were taken unawares; but even these were reported to have received no harm, neither was there any other Greek hurt in the action, except one upon the left wing, who was said to have been wounded by an arrow.

"Cyrus, seeing the Greeks victorious on their side, rejoiced in pursuit of the enemy, and was already worshipped as king by those about him; however, he was not so far transported as to leave his post and join in the pursuit; but, keeping his 600 horse in a body, observed the king's motions, well knowing that he was in the centre of the Persian army; for in all barbarian armies the generals ever place themselves in the centre, looking upon that post as the safest; on each side of which their strength is equally divided, and if they have occasion to give out any orders, they are received in half the time by the army. The king, therefore, being at that time in the centre of his own battle, was, however, beyond the left wing of Cyrus;

and when he saw none opposed him in front, nor any motion made to charge the troops that were drawn up before him, he wheeled to the left in order to surround their army; whereupon Cyrus, fearing he should get behind him and cut off the Greeks, advanced against the king, and, charging with his 600 horse, broke those who were drawn up before him, put the 6000 men to flight, and, as they say, killed Artagerses, their commander, with his own hand. These being broken, and the 600 belonging to Cyrus dispersed in the pursuit, very few were left about him, and those almost all persons who used to eat at his table; however, upon discovering the king properly attended, and unable to contain himself, he immediately cried out, 'I see the man,' then ran furiously at him, and, striking him on the breast, wounded him through his corslet (as Ctesias the physician says, who affirms that he cured the wound), having, while he was giving the blow, received a wound under the eye from somebody who threw a javelin at him with great force; at the same time, the king and Cyrus engaged hand to hand, and those about them in defence of each. In this action, Ctesias (who was with the king) informs us how many fell on his side; on the other, Cyrus himself was killed, and eight of his most considerable friends lay dead upon him. When Artagerses, who was in the greatest trust with Cyrus of any of his sceptred ministers, saw him fall, they say he leaped from his horse, and threw himself about him, when (as some say) the king ordered him to be slain upon the body of Cyrus, though others assert that, drawing his cimeter, he slew himself; for he wore a golden cimeter, a chain, bracelets, and other ornaments which were worn by the most considerable Persians, and was held in great esteem both for his affection and fidelity.

"Thus died Cyrus, a man universally acknowledged by those who were well acquainted with him, to have been, of all the Persians since the ancient Cyrus, endued with the most princely qualities, and to have appeared the most worthy of empire."*

The leader of the expedition having fallen in the manner now described, the king attacked the camp of his enemies, which was deserted by the barbarians who had been

* Spelman's Xenophon, 2 vols. 8vo, Cambridge, 1776, vol. i., p. 85–95.

left to defend it. The Greeks, however, saved a portion of the baggage, while their countrymen continued pursuing the fugitives until they were thirty stadia distant. When informed of the plunder of their tents, they returned, put themselves once more in a posture of defence, and even offered to make another attack; but the natives again fled, leaving their wearied allies to sleep under arms upon the field they had so gallantly won, unrefreshed with food, and uncertain of the fate of their chief.

Morning brought them the news of their loss, and the intelligence that they were alone in the country of their enemies; for Ariæus, who commanded the Asiatics in Cyrus's army, and who fled on hearing of his death, declined the crown which the Greeks offered to win for him in place of the fallen prince, and soon after proved one of their worst foes.

The king, in the mean time, finding that to destroy this valiant band would be a task of much danger, attempted to effect his purpose by treachery, and accordingly sent persons to negotiate with them for delivering up their arms. This being indignantly refused, Tissaphernes came forward as their friend, to mediate, as he said, between them and his majesty for a safe conduct beyond his dominions; and, after considerable delay, during which food was provided for the Greeks according to the terms of truce, they moved across the country from Cunaxa, where the battle was fought, towards the Tigris. The exact position of that town is unknown; but it must doubtless have stood somewhere above the present Felugia, the ancient Ancobar or Macepracta, because, in the first place, after the fight, they passed *through* the Median Wall on their way to Sittace, which lay *east* of it. Now this wall ran from Macepracta, or Ancobar, or Sippara, to Opis or Samarra, at the confluence of the Tigris and Physcus. Secondly, there are no hills whatever in Babylonia below Felugia; and the one of which Xenophon speaks must have been higher up, and nearer to the Pylæ. We come to the same conclusion, when we reflect that the two large canals, which they crossed after passing the wall, must have been those which branched off below Felugia, and stretched towards the site of the present Bagdad and Ctesiphon.

Sittace, to which they next came, standing near the River Tigris, is probably to be looked for at Sheriat el

Beitha, above the large village of Kazemeen; this situation agreeing well with the distance from the river and from Opis, as it is given by Xenophon. Here the Greeks appear to have been needlessly apprehensive that they would not be permitted to pass the bridge of boats, but be hemmed in between the river and the canal, and destroyed by hunger or repeated attacks. Next morning, however, they experienced no interruption in passing the bridge, which consisted of thirty-seven boats or pontoons; and they afterward made four days' march to the Physcus, where stood Opis, a large and populous city. This Physcus is the Athem; and the ruins of Opis may be traced at present, near the junction of that river with the Tigris. Here the Greeks passed the former stream, 100 feet in breadth, by a bridge of which no vestige exists, and encountered an army marching to the king's assistance under one of his brothers.

From Opis, a march of thirty-five parasangs, performed in seven days, brought them opposite to Cænæ, a large city on the banks of the Tigris. Rennell supposes this to have been the Senn of Eastern geographers, which he places at the confluence of the lesser Zab with the Tigris. Of the former river, or Altun-su of the present day, Xenophon makes no mention. On the other hand, Cænæ cannot, as Kinneir suggests, be identified with Tecreet, that place being only between fifty and sixty miles above the Athem, instead of 120, at least, as indicated by the Grecian historian. At the Zabatus, which was 400 feet broad—and which, undoubtedly, was no other than the greater Zab—the army halted three days, which were passed in suspicious jealousy both by the Greeks and by the barbarians who accompanied them under Tissaphernes, the officer appointed by the king to provide for their wants. The result was a conference, in the course of which he convinced Clearchus, the Greek general, of his sincerity: a fatal conviction, which led to his own destruction; for, on the very morning after these solemn assurances, Clearchus himself, with four other leaders, twenty captains, and two hundred soldiers, having gone to the tent of the Persian for the purpose of refuting certain calumnies against the loyalty of the Greeks, the chiefs were seized and afterward executed by orders of the king, while the soldiers were cut to pieces by the barbarians.

Thus deprived of their officers, and fatally convinced of the hostile designs of the Persians, the Greeks flew to arms, on which immediately came forward Ariæus, Arteazus, Mithradates, and others, who attempted to excuse the transaction by imputing to Clearchus a violation of his oaths; adding, that the other generals were safe, and exhorting the army to surrender their weapons, which were, they said, the king's property. But the snare was too palpable. They upbraided Ariæus with his infamous treachery; challenged the Persians, as a proof of their sincerity, to send back to them Proxenus and Menon, whom they had declared to be alive; and refused indignantly to abandon their arms. The royal chiefs retired; and the Greeks, sad and dejected, passed the night in painful anxiety. Well it was for them that they had in their number some whose minds were more strongly nerved, and capable of exertion in the hour of danger; and one more especially, whose fortitude, energy, and judgment were fully equal to the fearful emergency in which they stood.

This leader was Xenophon, an experienced soldier of mature age, but only a volunteer, associated with Proxenus by the ties of friendship and hospitality. Unable, as may be well imagined, under such circumstances, to sleep soundly, he arose in consequence of a troubled dream. As soon as he awoke, the first thought that occurred to him was this: "Why do I lie here? the night wears away, and as soon as the day appears, it is probable the enemy will come and attack us; and if we fall under the power of the king, what can preserve us from being spectators of the most tragical sights, from suffering the most cruel torments, and from dying with the greatest ignominy? Yet no one makes preparation for defence, or takes any care about it; but here we lie, as if we were allowed to live in quiet. From what city, therefore, do I expect a general to perform these things? What age do I wait for? But, if I abandon myself to the enemy this day, I shall never live to see another."*

He accordingly arose, assembled the remaining captains of Proxenus's party, forcibly pointed out to them the perils of their situation, and offered either to take the command, or follow whomsoever they might appoint to lead them in

* Spelman's Xenophon, vol. i., p. 179.

this extremity. The consequence was an immediate feeling of confidence in Xenophon, and an entreaty that he would assume the direction of affairs. Before midnight, the whole remaining officers were assembled; and to them, at the request of an old captain, Hieronymus of Elis, he repeated all he had before said, and suggested what he thought advisable to be done in their position. The result was a confirmation of his appointment as general, and the nomination of other officers in the room of those they had lost. The night was passed in counsel; and by break of day the soldiers were informed of the resolution taken by the commanders, tendered their oaths, and received instructions. The morning found those who had lain down a prey to doubt and almost to despair, transformed into a resolute army, determined to defend themselves to the last extremity, and to make every sacrifice for the common welfare.

Another base attempt on the part of Mithradates, to entrap the Greeks by professions of friendship, was baffled by the prudence of the generals; and the very next afternoon saw them, after having burned all their carriages, tents, and superfluous baggage, across the Zabatus, unassailed, and marching in order of battle. Upon seeing this, the treacherous King of Pontus threw aside the mask, and appeared in the rear with some light-armed archers and slingers, approaching at first as a friend, but discharging his missiles at the Greeks, and retiring, while these dared not leave their ranks to pursue the flying enemy.

The loss thus sustained produced some anxiety; but the expedient suggested by Xenophon, of selecting the best Rhodian slingers, and forming a corps of light cavalry to drive off such assailants, restored confidence, and proved its wisdom by enabling them the very next day to inflict a severe chastisement on Mithradates, who accordingly left them, for the remainder of the march, unmolested. That night they reached Larissa, which the general describes as an uninhabited city, two parasangs in circuit, with walls twenty-five feet thick and 100 high, and built of bricks. Near it stood a pyramid of stone, 100 feet square and 200 in height. This station, which, as their two harassed marches were short, could not have been very far from the Zab, must almost certainly have been the same of which Mr. Rich describes the ruins under the name of Nimrod,

and which that gentleman supposes to have been the city mentioned by Xenophon. The pyramid observed by him, still 144 feet high, is doubtless the one that, in the days of the Anabasis, was probably revetted with stone masonwork, vestiges of which still remain at the western base. The name, indeed, is puzzling; and the only way to get rid of the difficulty is to suppose that this city occupied the site of the Nimrodian Resin, to which, as already suggested, the people of the country have prefixed the Arabic article *Al.* It is true that Ras ul Ain, formerly Ressaina, may, so far as analogy of sound can be admitted as proof, appear to have equal, if not superior, claims with *Nimrod* to identity with Resin, "which is between Nineveh and Caleh;" for some persons place Caleh at Hulwan, and others near Racca at Callinicum, at the confluence of the Euphrates and Khabour.

If the conjecture of Mr. Rich be well founded, there can be very little doubt that the ruins of Nineveh must stand for Mespila, in spite of dissimilarity of name. The march of six parasangs agrees exactly with the six caravan hours, or four of a horseman, given by him as its distance (or that of Mosul) from Nimrod; and there is neither city of ancient times, nor any other relics at this day, that can at all answer to the situation of Mespila. The plinth of polished stone, full of shells, fifty feet in breadth and height, and the brick wall 100 feet high and six parasangs in circuit, can apply to no other remains than those of Nineveh, which, at the era of the Anabasis, must still have been great and imposing. The haste of a perilous retreat will account for some inaccuracy of description, and possibly of name.

From Mespila they continued their way along the country on the left of the Tigris, occasionally harassed by the enemy, whom they always repulsed, until the sixth morning, when, passing over a hilly tract, they suffered from the slings and darts of the barbarians, who occupied the heights. They had already found it necessary to make a change in the order of march, more suitable to the nature of the country than the hollow square hitherto adopted; and, perceiving that they fought with the light-armed Persians at disadvantage, they made a start in the night, by which they threw their enemies so far in the rear as to be allowed to proceed three days without interruption. But

on the fourth, the enemy having, contrary to custom, pressed forward during the hours of darkness, occupied a hill that commanded the road. Encouraged by the indefatigable Xenophon, they gained, after a desperate effort, a still higher mountain, which enabled them to attack their pursuers with success. The barbarians fled, and the brave Greeks passed on without interruption, Tissaphernes and Ariæus shunning their encounter, and turning from the road as they approached.

These marches and manœuvres brought them to the point where a range of mountains strikes down to the river-bank, leaving no room for troops to pass between them and the stream, which was so deep that their pikes, with which they sounded, did not reach the bottom. It is very doubtful what mountains can here be meant; for a late intelligent traveller, Colonel Shiel, a military man too, assures us that the Zaco range, which is by Rennell and Kinneir supposed to be that in question, does not come within six miles of the river; and that the intervening space is by no means so narrow. The Buhtan ridge, mentioned by the colonel as about six miles farther north than that of Zaco, agrees better with the description of Xenophon; but then there is no mention whatever made of passing the Khabour, a stream fifty yards wide, knee-deep, and very rapid in the month of August, which must have been crossed to reach those hills.

Here, although a Rhodian proposed that the army should cross the Tigris on rafts of inflated skins, and pledged himself for success, the Grecian generals resolved to turn towards the north, and cross the Carduchian Mountains.

In order to avoid interruption from the enemy, they commenced their march at night, and, traversing the intervening plain, reached the foot of the hills by break of day. The natives who inhabited the villages fled to the high grounds, leaving abundance of provisions behind; but they afterward attacked the strangers from the heights, and both parties sustained some loss.

Next day, the supernumerary slaves and sumpter horses being abandoned, the Greeks prepared for the arduous march that was before them; and, in spite of storms and every other obstacle, they steadily pursued their way, guided by certain prisoners; but their progress being necessarily slow, they had the mortification of occasionally losing,

by the missiles of the enemy, some brave men, whose bodies they could neither bury nor carry off. On the following morning, having sent a party of volunteers with a guide to occupy some cliffs that commanded a pass, over which lay their road, the rest of the army advanced, though exposed to great danger on account of the immense stones which the barbarians continually rolled down upon them from the precipices. At night, they took advantage of a dense mist to press forward; and, coming up with their rude assailants, they routed them; after which they passed the first mountain. Two others were won in like manner, with immense toil; and they were congratulating themselves on their success, when their active enemy commenced an attack in the rear, and cut off a detachment which had been left to guard a post. Attempts to treat with them were made in vain. They recovered some of the dead in exchange for the guides they had captured; found plenty of provisions in the villages as they passed along; but every day was a succession of struggles, attended with great fatigue and loss; for the Carduchians, who were skilful archers, had very long bows, which they drew by pressing them with their left foot, and the arrows pierced through the shields and corslets of the Greeks. On the fifth day's march it appears that they reached the plain of the River Centrites, which is by Kinneir supposed to be the Nicephorius of the Romans, and the Khabour of the present day. But it is clear that these two rivers are entirely different, and could not, by any construction, be represented as forming the boundary between Armenia and the country of the Carduchians, which last is barely penetrated by the Khabour. From this, indeed, it might be inferred that the followers of Xenophon entered the mountains at a point north of the Buhtan range, in which case the Centrites might be the Betlis chai, which rises among the lofty peaks northeast of Lake Van, and may therefore be fairly held as the southern boundary of Armenia. But, in fact, the description given by the author of the Anabasis, however graphic, is of too general a character, and contains too few recognisable points or names to be traced with accuracy, even were we better acquainted than we are with the geography of that part of the country. It is impossible, we conceive, to pronounce where the Greeks made their ascent, or even to identify the river which they

soon afterward crossed with so much boldness and skill in the face of a very determined enemy. There, however, we must take leave of Xenophon and his brave soldiers, who had yet much toil and danger to encounter before they could attain a sight of their native land. We have accompanied them to the confines of Armenia; and such of our readers as desire to learn their farther adventures, will find the narrative of their leader well illustrated by the labours of Rennell.

Seventy years after this celebrated achievement, the battle of Arbela or Gaugamela transferred the empire of Asia from Darius to Alexander the Great. The events which led to this revolution belong so entirely to another subject already handled in this work, that we shall not describe them here. On the death of the renowned conqueror, Babylonia and Mesopotamia, together with Syria, passed into the hands of the Seleucidæ, from whom they were in turn wrested by the Parthian dynasty of the Arsacidæ, about the year B.C. 164. In the possession of these last they remained, until the Mithradatic war led Lucullus in pursuit of Tigranes into Mesopotamia, when he took possession of Nisibis, B.C. 68. This was the first occasion on which a Roman army entered into that remote country.

In the year B.C. 64, Pompey reduced Syria to a Roman province, of which, nine years afterward, Marcus Licinius Crassus was made proconsul. Being an avaricious as well as an ambitious man, he regarded with an envious eye the power and supposed riches of the Parthians; and, in spite of the remonstrances of certain tribunes of the people, who represented them as faithful allies of the Roman nation, resolved to invade their country. Accordingly, having arrived at the seat of his government, where one of his first acts was to plunder the Temple of Jerusalem, he marched to the Euphrates, which he crossed by a bridge of boats; and, taking the Parthians at unawares, speedily overran Mesopotamia, then a part of their empire. But, instead of pursuing his success, by making himself master of Babylonia, and penetrating to Seleucia and Ctesiphon, he repassed the river in the beginning of autumn, leaving but 7000 foot and 1000 horse to secure his conquests.

This hasty retreat gave the natives time to recollect themselves; and Orodes their king, a warlike prince, immediately assembled a numerous army, while he sent am-

bassadors to Crassus to inquire the reason of his unexpected aggression. This general, who had spent the winter in extorting money from the Syrians and shamelessly plundering the temples, but who, at the approach of spring, assembled his army in order to recommence the war, when the Parthian deputies, reminding him of the treaties which they had entered into with Sylla and Pompey, offered to forget the past, and to permit the garrison to retire unmolested out of Mesopotamia, upon the single condition of his ceasing from farther hostilities, haughtily replied that they should have his answer at Seleucia. The chief of the ambassadors, by name Vageses or Vahesis, smiling at this response, showed the Roman commander the palm of his hand, and exclaimed, "Sooner, Crassus, shall you see hair grow here, than be master of Seleucia;" and, without adding another word, retired.

Orodes immediately took the field, leading one half of his army in person to make a diversion on the side of Armenia, while the other half, under the celebrated Surenas, marched into Mesopotamia, and soon recovered most of the cities which the invader had captured in the preceding year.

This Surenas—an appellation which, we are told by St. Martin, was that of a great Parthian family, and not a title—was not only one of the most influential individuals about the court of his sovereign, but also a consummate general. The Romans who had the good fortune to escape from Mesopotamia brought fearful accounts of the number, strength, and power of the enemy. They assured their fellow-soldiers that not only were the Parthians perfectly well disciplined, but that, while their defensive armour was so excellent as to resist the heaviest darts, their weapons were so sharp and strong that the buckler proved no defence against them. Crassus, considering these reports as the exaggerations of fear, resisted all remonstrances, and, being re-enforced with 6000 troops by the King of Armenia, commenced his march, although that monarch, even while promising him farther assistance, advised him by all means to avoid the sandy deserts of the low country. Accordingly, with several legions, 4000 horse, and a great many auxiliaries, making in all about 40,000 men, he crossed the Euphrates at Zeugma, the present Kelaat e Roum. Pressed by the advice of his officers,

he had consented to keep by the river-bank all the way to Seleucia, when Abgarus, king of Edessa, whom the Romans believed to be their friend, but who was in reality devoted to Surenas, unfortunately prevailed on him to alter his plan. The crafty barbarian represented the Parthians as already in utter dismay; and assured him that, in the war he was going to wage, feet and wings would be required to catch a flying enemy, rather than arms to fight a resolute one, and that he himself was prepared to lead them to certain victory. Conducted by this treacherous monarch, the legions entered first a green plain, divided by many rivulets, which afforded them easy and pleasant marching. But, as they advanced, the scene gradually changed; the roads grew worse; and they had to climb mountains and rocks, which brought them to a sandy waste where there was neither food nor water to be obtained. While beginning to suspect the honesty of their guides, a messenger from the sovereign of Armenia acquainted Crassus that the invasion of his own country by Orodes would prevent him from sending any farther aid; but he repeated his advice to avoid the barren plains, where his troops would perish with hunger, and take the mountainous road to Armenia, where he might join forces with him against the common enemy. Yet the Roman commander, with a degree of blindness that appears incomprehensible, still put faith in Abgarus, who led them some days across a burning desert, without hill or tree, or even a blade of grass, and not a drop of water to quench their increasing thirst.

To this condition were matters reduced when the scouts gave information that a numerous army of Parthians were at hand to attack them. Crassus immediately drew up his fainting and exhausted men, at first following the advice of the quæstor Cassius, who proposed an extended line, in order to occupy more ground, but instantly changed this arrangement, according to the suggestions of Abgarus, who, assuring them that the Parthians were but few in number, advised a compact disposition. So the troops were drawn up in a square, with a detachment of horse to support each cohort, twelve of which composed the front on every side. In this order they came to the banks of the Balissus, the present Belejick,* where most of the

* This would lead to the belief that Crassus did not cross the Euphra-

officers were for encamping, in order to refresh the soldiers; but their leader again permitting himself to be deceived, or yielding to the ardour of his own son, only suffered them to snatch a meal as they stood in their ranks, and then pushed on against the enemy.

Surenas had concealed most of his men, and caused the rest to cover their armour, so that his force at first seemed very small; but no sooner did he observe that the Romans had fallen into the snare, than he gave the signal, when the Parthians, starting up, as it were, out of the ground, appeared, horse and man, shining from head to foot in complete steel. Nor had the former time to recover from their astonishment before they found themselves charged by young Surenas, who, pike in hand, strove to break through the hostile ranks. But habitual fortitude and discipline counteracted the effect of surprise. The assailants, being repulsed, retreated to a safe distance; whence they darted on the foe a shower of sharp and heavy arrows. The light-armed foot and archers advanced to drive them away, but were themselves soon compelled to seek shelter behind the heavy troops; while the enemy, approaching still nearer, directed a deadly flight of missiles into the densely-compacted legions, where not a shaft failed to inflict a wound. The wings next deploying, advanced to the charge, but all in vain. The Parthian horsemen shot with as much effect while retiring as advancing; so that, whether the Romans kept their ground or gave way, they were equally the butt of those dreadful shafts.

In vain, too, did the latter expect that those weapons would be exhausted, and their foes compelled to retreat, for there were multitudes of camels in the rear, loaded with arrows, from which the mounted archers ever and anon replenished their quivers. Hence the bravest began to despair of saving themselves from an enemy whom they could neither reach nor avoid. At length the proconsul sent his son with some chosen troops to attack the enemy, and procure at least a short rest for the legionaries. The

tes at the upper Zeugma or Roumkalah, which is scarcely forty miles from Orfa, and quite out of the way of the Belejick, and that he must either have crossed at Beles or the lower Zeugma (Thapsacus), from whence, as a matter of course, he must have crossed the Belejick in his way to the plains where he was defeated.

young Crassus advanced, and, seeing the Parthians wheel and retreat as he proceeded onward, called aloud, " They flee before us," and pressed on with the utmost ardour. But, when they had drawn him to a sufficient distance from the main body, they returned furiously to the charge, upon which he halted to meet the shock. But they, opposing their heavy-armed horse to his front, surrounded him on all sides with their light troops, who raised so thick a dust that none of the Romans could distinguish friend from foe; while from the dense cloud issued showers of arrows, that soon covered with dead bodies the ground where they had stood. In vain did their young commander exhort his men to march up to the assailants. In reply, they showed him their bodies transfixed with missiles, their hands riveted to their bucklers and their feet to the earth, and asked how, in such a condition, they could attempt to overtake the enemy. He then charged their heavy cavalry; and a thousand Gauls whom he had brought from the West acquitted themselves with dauntless courage. They closed with the enemy, and sometimes pulled them from their horses; or, dismounting, pierced the bellies of the steeds from beneath. But at length, harassed with heat and thirst, and having lost most of their horses, the Gauls fell back upon the infantry, who, as well as themselves, were immediately surrounded again by the Parthians, and stood as a mark for their shafts.

Retiring, thus assailed, to a rising ground, the younger Crassus, while his men fell thick around him, indignantly refused an offer of two Greeks to conduct him safely to Ischines, provided he would leave his troops; and at length, frantic with grief at seeing the bravest of his friends thus uselessly sacrificed, and unable any longer to use his arm, which was transpierced by a barbed shaft, he desired one of his companions to put an end to his life, that he might not fall alive into the enemy's hands. This example was followed by most of the surviving nobility who were with him; while of the remainder, five hundred were made prisoners, and the rest were cut to pieces.

The unfortunate proconsul, who had retired to a height in the rear to wait for his son's return or to mark his progress, was roused from his dream of hope by a messenger, who told him that the youth would certainly be lost unless immediate aid were sent to him. Prudence gave way to

paternal solicitude and the desire of saving the brave combatants; but, before he had advanced far, he was met by the victorious Parthians, whose shouts of triumph told a tale which was dismally confirmed to the unhappy father by the sight of the young leader's head fixed upon a spear. It was no time for the indulgence of sorrow. "This misfortune is entirely mine," said he to his dismayed troops; "the loss of one person cannot affect the victory. Let us charge—let us fight like Romans: if you feel for a father who has just lost a son whose valour you admired, let it appear in your rage and resentment against those insulting barbarians!"

But it was too late. The faintness of their shout gave proof that their physical strength and courage were alike exhausted. Again was the air darkened with clouds of arrows from an enemy whom they could not approach; and many of the men, in desperation, threw themselves among the heavy-armed horse to seek a speedier death. And thus did the fierce attack continue unceasingly till nightfall, when the assailants retired.

A melancholy night it was to the Romans. Stretched on the ground, at a distance from his soldiers and his tent, and shrouded only by his military cloak, their wretched commander lay writhing under the weight of his shame and sorrow, insensible to all consolation, and equally prostrated in mind and body. One of his lieutenants, Octavius, after making vain efforts to rouse him to exertion, now summoned a council of war, in which it was resolved that the remains of the army should retire in silence, under the cover of darkness, to the city of Charræ, which was held by a Roman garrison; a dreadful alternative, as it left the wounded to the mercy of a savage foe. No sooner did the movement commence, than the ears of the retreating soldiers were assailed by the cries and reproaches of their wretched companions. Three hundred light-horse deserted, and pursued their way to Zeugma, where they crossed the Euphrates without halting, except to tell at Charræ that Crassus had fought a battle with the Parthians.

The governor, suspecting from their manner that all was not right, ordered his men under arms, and, marching out, met the proconsul, whom, with his broken forces, he conducted into the city; the wounded and fugitives meanwhile being put to the sword by the enemy, and several smaller

detachments destroyed. Nor did the walls of Charræ long prove a protection to Crassus. Surenas, learning that he had taken refuge in it, sent to inform the garrison, that if they expected to obtain any terms from him, both the general and Cassius the quæstor must be delivered up to him in chains. A council of war, which assembled to hear this report, resolved that it was expedient to remove from the city that very night, and to seek some other asylum; and secrecy was especially enjoined on all the commanders. Yet the infatuated Crassus himself betrayed the secret to Andromachus, whom he had pitched upon as a guide, and who happened to be a creature of Surenas. Having given due information of the intended movement to the Parthian chief, he led the devoted Romans by devious ways into a tract of marshy land, till Cassius, suspecting treachery, refused to proceed, and, taking his own way, succeeded in reaching Syria with 500 horse. Octavius, having been more fortunate in his guides, pursued his march to the mountains of Sinnaca with 5000 men, and there intrenched himself.

The unfortunate proconsul remained entangled in the marshes into which he had been misled till morning, when the rising sun saw him surrounded by the Parthian cavalry. In spite of opposition, however, he gained a hill not far from his lieutenant, who, seeing his danger, flew to his assistance, and charging the enemy, rescued his forlorn commander, whom the troops bore safely off in a hollow square, covered by their bucklers. This check appears to have in some measure disconcerted the pursuers; and Surenas, observing them reluctant to attack their antagonists in position, resolved to compass his ends by treachery. Feigning a desire to negotiate, and to put an end to a war which he said would be rendered more bitter and deadly should a Roman general be made its victim, he invited Crassus to an interview, advancing with unbended bow and open arms.

This time it was not the rashness of the leader, but the turbulence and fears of the legionaries, rendered outrageous by their sufferings and situation, that led to a fatal result; for they compelled him, against his better judgment, to hold a conference with Surenas. Accompanied by Octavius and Petronius, with a few soldiers, he accordingly descended the hill, where he was met by the Parthian in per-

son, mounted on a superb horse. "What do I see!" he exclaimed, "a Roman general on foot, and we on horseback! Let a horse be brought for him immediately." "Be not surprised," said Crassus; "each comes to the conference after the manner of his country." "It is well," said Surenas; "but the articles of peace must be signed on the bank of the Euphrates, for you Romans do not always remember your conventions." A gallant steed, with rich caparison and bit of gold, was then brought and offered to the proconsul as on the part of King Orodes; upon which some of the Parthian officers placed him upon the animal, and began to scourge it forward with great violence. Octavius resented the insult by seizing the bridle. His men flocked around him; a scuffle ensued; when, drawing his sword, he killed one of Surenas's grooms, and was instantly struck down himself by a blow from behind. The fight soon became general, and ended in the death of most of the Romans, and of Crassus himself, who thus fell a victim to an inordinate desire of power or of wealth, which appears to have utterly blinded his better judgment, and led him into acts more like those of a madman than of an experienced leader.

The rest of his army either surrendered to the enemy, or, dispersing in the night, were pursued and cut to pieces. To Rome, the misfortune was not restricted to the loss of 30,000 brave soldiers and valuable officers, but involved a severe shock to her military reputation, which that haughty nation felt so deeply, that the greatest efforts were subsequently made to efface the stain, and revenge the insult offered to her name and arms.

In pondering over this catastrophe and the fate of Crassus, the mind, unavoidably reverting to the very different fortunes of Xenophon and his Ten Thousand Greeks, is led to contrast the prudence, the intrepid perseverance, and admirable conduct of the one commander, with the blind infatuation and obstinate presumption of the other. Both alike environed with fierce enemies, in a hostile country, far from aid, had to depend entirely on their own resources. In fact, the situation of the Greeks was worse than that of the Romans, inasmuch as their numbers were smaller, their foes infinitely more numerous, their distance from home incomparably greater, and the moral effect, of course, correspondingly more depressing. It is true that the Per-

sians of Artaxerxes were inferior to the Parthians of Orodes in military skill and courage; but, had Xenophon suffered himself to be cajoled by the treacherous advice of Tissaphernes and Mithradates, or been induced to cross the Tigris into the arid plains of Mesopotamia, we may be certain that none of his followers would ever again have seen their native country. On the other hand, had Crassus but paid attention to the sound counsel of the King of Armenia, and taken the mountainous road to that country, neither he nor his troops would have fallen unavenged by the arrows of the Parthian horsemen. But, as the balance of difficulty and danger was all against Xenophon, so was that of conduct and moral intrepidity in his favour; and we may be sure that under no circumstances would Crassus ever have evinced that admirable presence of mind which, while it preserved the little band of Greeks in the plains of Assyria, enabled their commander to make head against the attacks of the bold Carduchian mountaineers, in his arduous march across their almost impervious country.

CHAPTER X.

Continued Contests between the Romans and Persians.

The Parthians overrun the Country to Antioch, which is twice saved with Difficulty.—Antony, having obtained the Eastern Provinces of the Roman Empire, overtaxes Syria.—That Province, &c., overrun by Labienus.—Pacoras defeated by Ventidius and slain.—Antony resolves to invade the Parthian Empire.—His Success at first.—Takes the Route of Armenia.—Invests Praaspa, the Capital of Media.—Is forced to raise the Siege and retreat.—Hardships during his Retreat.—Succeeds in reaching and crossing the Araxes.—His impatient Obstinacy.—Farther Losses in Armenia.—Augustus Cæsar forces Phraates to make Peace.—Successes of Trajan.—War continued with various Success.—Exploits of Shapoor.—Constantius succeeded by Julian.—Julian's Defiance of Shapoor.—His Expedition.—Successful Career.—Change of Fortune at Ctesiphon.—He is betrayed—Attacked, and killed by a Javelin.—Disastrous Retreat of the Roman Army under Jovian.—Mesopotamia continues the Theatre of War till the Invasion of the Huns.—The Roman Provinces invaded by Nooshirwan.—He is checked by Belisarius.—Victorious Career of Khoosroo Purveez.—Arrested by Heraclius, who outmanœuvres and defeats the Persians.—Triumphant Expeditions of Heraclius.—Farther Efforts of Khoosroo.—He is defeated at all Points.—Destagerd taken.—Khoosroo put to Death by his Son Siroes, who concludes a Treaty with Heraclius.—Capture of Ctesiphon by the Moslems, and Incorporation of the two Provinces with the Dominions of the Caliphs.

After the defeat of Crassus, the Parthians, elated by success, crossed the Euphrates, and overran the country as far as Antioch, which they twice besieged. The first time it was saved by the valour of Cassius and Cicero, and the second by the intrigues of Bibulus, the Roman governor, who created a diversion by promoting a rebellion among them. But their power and their insolence had arrived at such a pitch, that the great Julius himself, after having become master of the Republic, considered them as enemies worthy of his sword, and proposed an expedition against them, which was only frustrated by his murder.

In the partition of empire that followed, Antony having obtained the eastern provinces, and overtaxed that of Syria, the inhabitants invited the Parthians to invade the country; and, accordingly, led by Labienus, one of Pompey's generals, they overran it, as well as Palestine and

Phœnicia, even to the gates of Tyre, making great advances also in Asia Minor. But the bravery and skill of Ventidius, who served under Marc Antony, put a stop to their progress, and restored the Roman affairs. He surprised the invader, who fled to Tauris, and sent to Pacoras, the son of Orodes, for assistance. But Ventidius entirely defeated the Parthians, put Labienus to death, and forced the barbarians to recross the Euphrates. In a second attempt they were still more unsuccessful; for, being deceived by a stratagem, they were utterly routed, Pacoras himself slain, and most of their army put to the sword. Unfortunately, perhaps, for the Roman name, the conqueror, fearing to excite too far the jealous disposition of his master, did not push his conquests across the river, nor, as he might have done, annex Mesopotamia and Babylonia to the Asiatic provinces, but contented himself with reducing the revolted places in Asia Minor.

Antony had, in fact, already taken umbrage at the great success of his general, whom, on his arrival in Syria, he sent to Rome, on pretence that he deserved a triumph, and he himself immediately assumed the command. The army, as we learn, amounted to 100,000 men, in a high state of discipline, and amply provided with military stores; while, owing to the disturbances which had recently occurred in Parthia, where the tyrannical Phraates, having put his father Orodes to death, had disgusted many of his nobles, there appeared every reason to hope for success. And success did at first attend his steps, for he subdued all the neighbouring states, including Armenia; but having, while he attempted to cross the Euphrates, endeavoured to throw Phraates off his guard by negotiation, he found himself baffled by the vigilance of his antagonist, who had guarded the passes. He therefore proceeded to attack Media.

But, in carrying this measure into effect, he suffered himself, like Crassus, to be deceived and betrayed. Artabazus, king of Armenia, who had his own ends in view, led the army by such circuitous routes that, fatigued and impatient, Antony left his military engines under his lieutenant Stratianus, with 10,000 men, while he pushed forward to invest Praaspa, the capital.*

* The site of this Median capital is not known. It has been placed at Casbin and at Sultanieh; but D Anville rejects both these positions.

To take this place, however, without his battering machines, he found to be impossible; and the Parthians, resolving to frustrate his enterprise, pushed past the beleaguered city, and cut off the whole of the detachment to whose care they had been intrusted. The consequence was, that he was forced to raise the siege; and, after a vain attempt to conclude a peace, on condition of receiving from the Parthian monarch the standards and prisoners taken in the expedition of Crassus, he trusted to an equivocal promise of safety, and commenced a retreat towards the Araxes, which, in point of hardship and painful anxiety, yielded not, perhaps, to that of the Ten Thousand Greeks, whose sufferings were often in his mind. It is true, he had but 300 miles to traverse through a hostile country, but his wily foe was most powerful and active; while the troops under his command were depressed by ill success, and so much in want of the necessaries of life, that, before the march was over, a quart of wheat was sold for fifty drachmas, and barley loaves for their weight in silver. Thus situated, in the course of twenty-seven days he was eighteen times attacked by the whole Parthian forces, besides incidental skirmishes, in which he lost many men; and thrice he nearly fell into an ambuscade, from which he was only saved by the fidelity of his guide, a native of the country. But so harassing and painful were the circumstances of the retreat, that his constancy utterly gave way; and, rushing into his tent, he called on one of his freedmen to put an end to his life, and conceal his head, that it might not fall into the hands of the enemy. Nor would he have altered his intention but for the opportune entrance of the guide, who assured him that the worst was over. "O the Ten Thousand!" he frequently exclaimed, as he saw his men dropping from fatigue, or transfixed by the Parthian arrows: and when, at length, diminished in numbers, wounded, and exhausted, they actually recrossed the Araxes, the soldiers fell down and kissed the soil, embracing each other like persons reprieved from death.

But, though Antony in this desperate enterprise displayed many of the good qualities of a general, and succeeded in rescuing the remains of his legions, the impatient obstinacy which led him into his embarrassments was more disastrous to Rome than even the total failure of Crassus. Nor did his infatuated imprudence end here; for, eager to

rejoin his mistress, the celebrated Cleopatra, instead of halting in Armenia to refresh his troops, he led them, without stopping, over its snow-covered mountains, and thus added to their previous misfortunes the loss of 8000 men. In short, scarcely one third of his army returned to Syria.

Some time afterward, Augustus Cæsar, too powerful for even the Parthians to contend with, compelled Phraates to conclude a peace, one condition of which was the surrender of all the standards and prisoners taken from the Romans in their several expeditions. After the death of that emperor, the treaty was frequently violated, particularly by the first Vologeses, who ascended the throne about A.D. 50, and made war upon the Europeans with various success. But Trajan completely turned the tide of conquest against them, by first overrunning Mesopotamia and Assyria, and, secondly, by placing in the hands of Parthanaspates the sceptre of Parthia, thus rendering the whole country tributary to Rome. It is true that matters did not continue long on this footing, and even Mesopotamia was frequently abandoned and recovered, till at length the power of the Arsacidæ was utterly broken by Ardeshir Babegan, called Artaxerxes in the West, who founded the new dynasty of the Sassanides.

In the frequent wars which raged between the Romans and Sassanians, Mesopotamia still continued to be the great field on which the prize of victory was contended for; and the city of Orfa (Edessa) witnessed the utter defeat of the Emperor Valerian by Shapoor. Odenathus, the chief of Palmyrene, husband of the celebrated Zenobia, revived the drooping fortunes of Rome; and though the imprudent rashness of Galerius subjected him to the mortification of a defeat near the banks of the Euphrates, he soon retrieved his error by utterly destroying the army of Narses, and depressing that monarch to the condition of a vassal.

The result of these victories was a treaty of peace, by which Mesopotamia and five provinces of Assyria became united to the Roman Empire. The second Shapoor, distinguished in Persian history by the name of Zoolactaf, a brave and successful warrior, disputed this arrangement; and his efforts to reconquer the fine country lost by Narses rendered the Mesopotamian plain once more a scene of

devastation. But he lost, in the protracted siege of Nisibis, the advantages he had gained in the battle of Singara; and a Scythian invasion forced him to an unwilling truce with Rome. A successful expedition to the banks of the Oxus, however, enabled the warlike monarch to return with his ranks re-enforced by a large body of veterans; and, had he not wasted the flower of his troops and the best of the season in a tedious investment of Amida, he might have wrested the whole region from the Roman arms, as he did the important strongholds of Sinjar and Bezabde.

The efforts of the aged and weak Constantius were unable to retrieve the losses in those provinces; but when Shapoor was informed that the purple had descended on a younger and more resolute monarch, the celebrated Julian, he condescended to make overtures of peace. The pride of the Eastern prince was astonished by the firmness of the new emperor, who sternly declared that he would never consent to hold a peaceful conference among the flames and ruins of the cities of Mesopotamia; and who added, with a smile of contempt, that it was needless to treat by ambassadors, as he himself had determined to visit speedily the court of Persia.

In the spring of A.D. 363, accordingly, passing through Beræa (now Aleppo) to Hierapolis, the appointed rendezvous of the Roman troops, he crossed the Euphrates by a bridge of boats, and advanced immediately to Charræ. From hence he despatched 30,000 men, under his kinsman Procopius, and Sebastian, duke of Egypt, towards Nisibis, to secure that frontier; afterward, with the assistance of the King of Armenia, to ravage Media and Adiabene, and then to meet him under the walls of Ctesiphon, whither, by advancing along the bank of the Euphrates, he hoped himself to arrive. But the Armenian proved as faithless to Julian as his predecessor had been to Antony, and when the day of need arrived, he appeared not. The emperor, a month after his departure from Antioch, arrived at Circesium, the extreme limit of the Roman dominions; for the Khabour had for some time been regarded as their boundary in this direction. Sixty-five thousand effective and well-disciplined soldiers crossed this stream, accompanied by all the requisite engines and muniments of war, laden upon 1100 vessels of various descriptions and burden, which floated simultaneously down the Euphrates. Fol-

lowing nearly the tract of Cyrus the Younger, he spared Anatho, denounced a heavy doom upon Thilutha, should he return victorious, and, committing great havoc, in spite of the presence of a hostile army which hovered round his legions, in fifteen days arrived at Macepracta, where, after a hot assault, he took and razed the ill-fated town of Perisabor.

The fortress of Maogamalcha, reputed impregnable, was his next object of attack; and, while the inhabitants were deriding the assailants, and singing the praises of Shapoor, a mine, which was silently pushed into the body of the place, admitted 1500 chosen men. It was forthwith taken; and the revenge of the soldiers was satiated by a bloody massacre.

Controlling by a manly address the insolent complaints of his army, he next led them against Ctesiphon itself, bringing his fleet across the narrow isthmus of Babylonia by means of a cut between the Nahr Malikah and a channel opened for the same purpose by the Emperor Trajan. By a bold manœuvre, he passed the Tigris itself in the night, making good his footing on the farther bank, in spite of the enemy's opposition. Here, however, the fortunes of Julian changed. His anxious looks towards the northern plains of Assyria failed to discover the advance of his troops under Procopius; he was therefore forced to relinquish the intention of besieging Ctesiphon; and, rejecting with a foolish obstinacy the pacific overtures of Shapoor, he resolved, like Alexander, to carry the war into the heart of his enemy's country, and force him in the open field to contend for the dominion of Asia.

But the emperor, however vigilant, appears to have been open to imposition. A Persian noble, who placed himself in the dangerous position of a spy, by pretending friendship, gained an influence over him; and through his advice, as it appears, he was induced to burn his fleet, and the greater part of his magazines. The former might have been useless for remounting the Tigris; but he speedily had to deplore the loss of his provisions. No sooner did he leave his camp before Ctesiphon, and turn his face towards Media, than flames arose in every quarter: the crops were burned with fire; the cattle were driven away; the inhabitants everywhere disappeared; the desolated country could no longer supply food to its invaders; and

they were soon reduced to the scanty supply which they had saved from their stores. The spy and his associates disappeared when their work was accomplished, dissipating the visions of victory which Julian had entertained; and in their room were seen bodies of Persian horsemen, who harassed his army as soon as he began to retreat towards the banks of the Tigris. Next morning he was surrounded by vast numbers of the enemy, who proved only the vanguard of that mighty force which Shapoor had summoned from every province of his dominions. This prince now resumed the tactics which had ruined Crassus and Antony, compelling the Romans to retreat under a shower of darts, and harassed by constant attacks. A severe skirmish took place at Maronga, though the famished legionaries could scarcely sustain their arms. After a night of alarming visions, as Julian led his army through a hilly tract, the heights and passes of which had been occupied by the enemy, he was informed that his rear was suddenly attacked. "The heat of the weather had tempted him to lay aside his cuirass; but he snatched a shield from one of his attendants, and hastened, with a sufficient reenforcement, to the relief of the rear-guard. A similar danger recalled the intrepid prince to the defence of the front; and, as he galloped between the two columns, the centre of the left was attacked, and almost overpowered, by a furious charge of the Persian cavalry and elephants. This huge body was soon defeated by the well-timed evolution of the light infantry, who aimed their weapons with dexterity and effect against the backs of the horsemen and the legs of the elephants. The barbarians fled; and Julian, who was foremost in every danger, animated the pursuit with his voice and gestures. His trembling guards, scattered and oppressed by the disorderly throng of friends and enemies, reminded their fearless sovereign that he was without armour, and conjured him to decline the fate of the impending ruin. As they exclaimed, a cloud of darts and arrows was discharged from the flying squadrons, and a javelin, after rasing the skin of his arm, transpierced the ribs, and fixed in the inferior part of the liver. Julian attempted to draw the deadly weapon from his side, but his fingers were cut by the sharpness of the steel, and he fell senseless from his horse. His guards flew to his relief, and the wounded emperor was gently

raised from the ground, and conveyed out of the tumult of the battle into an adjacent tent. The report of the melancholy event passed from rank to rank; but the grief of the Romans inspired them with invincible valour and the desire of revenge. The bloody and obstinate conflict was maintained by the two armies till they were separated by the total darkness of the night. The first words that Julian uttered, after his recovery from the fainting-fit into which he had been thrown by loss of blood, were expressive of his martial spirit. He called for his horse and arms, and was impatient to rush into the battle. His remaining strength was exhausted by the painful effort; and the surgeons who examined his wound discovered the symptoms of approaching death. He employed the awful moments with the firm temper of a hero and a sage; the philosophers who had accompanied him in this fatal expedition compared the tent of Julian with the prison of Socrates; and the spectators, whom duty, or friendship, or curiosity had assembled round his couch, listened with respectful grief to the funeral oration of their dying emperor."*

Such was the end of the Emperor Julian: a man whose gallantry and virtues render still more dark the stain of apostacy which has obscured his character. The army, perplexed and confounded at an event so disastrous, eagerly adopted the first suggestions offered; and Jovian, who possessed not a single title to the choice, was elected his successor. The death of his able opponent renewed the hopes of Shapoor, who attacked the Romans repeatedly, always inflicting a heavy loss, until, after encamping at Samarra and Carche, they pitched their tents at Dura, on the fourth night after the fall of their leader. An attempt to cross the Tigris at this place spent in vain two precious days; but the fainting spirits of the fugitives were here revived by the unexpected sound of peace. The Persian, who felt that his very success was ruinous, and that, though he might annihilate the Roman army, it must be at the expense of his own, condescended to offer terms; and, after craftily tantalizing the invaders during four days—a delay that exhausted the constancy of the irresolute Jovian as well as the scanty provisions of his troops—he vouchsafed

* Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, by the Rev. H. H. Milman, 8vo, Lond., 1838, vol. iv., p. 186–188.

to specify, as the terms, the cession of the five provinces which his grandfather had given up to Rome, with the impregnable city of Nisibis, and some other of the strongest places in Mesopotamia. With these humiliating conditions the emperor complied. He crossed the river unassisted, but unassailed by the haughty conqueror; and the loss which his followers sustained in this passage was not inferior to the carnage of a day of battle. He had next to traverse two hundred miles of desert, enduring all the pangs of thirst and hunger; and the pathless waste was strewed with the bodies, the arms, and the baggage of his soldiery. A small supply of food was forwarded to the fainting squadrons on their march; at Thilsphata, their imperial master received the generals of Mesopotamia; and the poor remains of a splendid army at length found repose beneath the walls of Nisibis.

For nearly two centuries after this time, the same region continued to be the theatre of battle, passing partially from hand to hand, according as the throne of either empire was ably or weakly filled.

The invasion of the Huns had perplexed both powers, and forced them alternately to withdraw their forces from this quarter, in order to repel another and more dangerous foe. But the first Khoosroo, known in the East by the name of Nooshirwan, and who mounted the throne of the Sassanides in the reign of Justinian, A.D. 531, resolving to extend his dominion towards the West, took the field, and with a large army overran Syria and Cilicia. Antioch was burned to quicken the negotiations for a peace, in which he dared to demand an annual tribute and subsidy from Rome. But, while taking city after city with frightful rapidity, his career was checked by the genius of Belisarius; and, after various fortunes, a treaty was once more concluded, to be broken soon after, when Khoosroo found he could recommence the war with a prospect of success. His last pitched battle with the Romans was fought at Malatia, with a result that would have remained doubtful had he not retired in the night, conscious of a loss, the greatness of which his opponents had not the means to estimate.

The last successful inroad upon the imperial provinces was made by the no less celebrated Khoosroo Purveez, a prince whose subsequent fate belied the promise of his

earlier career. Syria was rapidly reduced; Antioch was taken; and the capital of Cappadocia, with the holy city of Jerusalem, fell before the arms of this victorious monarch. Egypt again owned a Persian master. "His western trophy was erected, not on the walls of Carthage, but in the neighbourhood of Tripoli. The Greek colonies of Cyrene were finally extirpated; and the conqueror, treading in the footsteps of Alexander, returned in triumph through the sands of the Libyan desert. In the same campaign, another army advanced from the Euphrates to the Thracian Bosphorus; Chalcedon surrendered after a long siege; and a Persian camp was maintained above ten years in the presence of Constantinople."*

But the day of reverse at length arrived. Heraclius, aroused from sloth or despair, made gigantic efforts, and evinced a knowledge and conduct in warlike affairs which he had never been suspected to possess. Concluding a peace with the Avars, who had advanced to the gates of Constantinople, he mustered his troops at Issus, adroitly drew the Persians, who occupied Cilicia, into a general action, defeated them, marched through Cappadocia, and wintered his army on the fertile banks of the Halys. The spring saw him again in movement. Sailing from Constantinople to Trebizond, he gathered together his soldiers, and, while the enemy was fruitlessly insulting the capital, he suddenly made his appearance at Tauris, in the heart of the Persian territories. At the head of 40,000 men, Khoosroo himself retreated before the emperor, who pursued his victorious career till the approach of the cold months, when he retired to the plains of Mogam. The succeeding campaign carried his army to Casbin and Ispahan, where never yet had Romans been seen. The rest of the season was marked by a series of triumphs; and another winter of repose only prepared his troops for new successes. Traversing the mountains of Kurdistan, and passing the Tigris, the emperor deposited his spoils and captives at Diarbekir, and informed the senate of Constantinople of his safety and success. Crossing the Euphrates by a ford, he next advanced against a multitude of barbarians who defended the passage of the Sarus, overthrew and dispersed them, and, marching through

Sebaste in Cappadocia, the present Sivas, reached the coast of the Euxine, just three years from the time he left it on his long and glorious expedition.

But the ambition of Khoosroo was not yet humbled, nor his resources exhausted. Hate and a thirst of revenge exasperated the one, a wide realm and a host of tributaries supplied the other; and a treaty formed with the Chagan of the Avars gave him additional ground of hope. Three armies were simultaneously raised: the first, of 50,000 "Golden Spears," was destined to oppose Heraclius; the second was stationed to prevent his junction with the troops of his brother Theodorus; the third was directed to act with the Avars, who advanced with 100,000 men to besiege Constantinople. The preparations and arrangements of the emperor were not less active and earnest; but we must refer our readers to the pages of the Roman historian for an account of the deliverance of his capital. Himself, with 70,000 men, flew to the recovery of Syria, Mesopotamia, and Armenia; while his intrigues, or the insane jealousy of the king, produced the defection of Sarbar, the general of his third division, and neutralized the opposition he would have made to the Roman arms.

Traversing the country from the Araxes to the Tigris, Heraclius met and overthrew the army of Khoosroo on the plain of Nineveh, in a battle that raged from daybreak till late at night. Those of the Persians who were not killed in the action dispersed, and the victorious Romans continued their march unopposed through Assyria to Destagerd. Their way was marked with fire and blood: they spoiled and destroyed the country in the very wantonness of vengeance. But "the recovery of 300 Roman standards, and the deliverance of the numerous captives of Edessa and Alexandrea, reflect a purer glory on the imperial arms."

The passage of the Arba or Diala could scarcely have formed an obstacle to arrest the career of Heraclius. The rigour of the season—for it was winter—and the fame of an impregnable capital, may have had their influence. Be that as it may, the Roman emperor stopped short of Ctesiphon; and, passing through Seazurus, the present Shahrasour, he crossed Mount Zara of Zagros—probably Avroman, and reached Gandzaca, now Tabreez, most fortunately before a fall of snow, which lasted thirty-four days.

But the pride of the Persian had not yet sunk to the level of his fortune. In spite of his disgraceful flight from Destagerd, he commanded a new army to be raised, and a new camp to be formed behind the Arba; and rejecting all pacific overtures, and even solicitations, from a conqueror whose retreat had inspired the vanquished with some confidence, he thought only of continuing the struggle. But his will was no longer the law in Persia; a conspiracy of his nobles, headed by his son Siroes, raised the latter to the throne, and sent the aged monarch to a bloody tomb. A treaty was formed between the new sovereign and Heraclius, who returned to enjoy his well-merited triumph in Constantinople.

The death of Khoosroo occurred A.D. 628. Nine years afterward, Ctesiphon, his capital, which had been spared by the Romans, was sacked and destroyed by the victorious followers of Mohammed. In another year the whole of Syria was wrested from Heraclius, now aged and feeble, by the grasp of the invincible Moslems. The walls of Edessa and Amida, of Dara and Nisibis, which had resisted the arms and engines of Shapoor or Nooshirwan, were levelled in the dust; and Mesopotamia and Assyria, with the rest of Western and Central Asia, became thenceforth integral parts of the vast dominions of the caliphs and their successors.

CHAPTER XI.

Present State of Mesopotamia.

Buckingham's Account of Bir.—Orfa.—Mosque and Pool of "Abraham the Beloved."—Mosques.—Gardens.—Population.—Manufactures.—Castle.—History.—Haran.—Division of Opinions in regard to its Identity with the Haran of Genesis.—March to Mardin.—Plundering Arabs.—Mardin described.—Ceremonial of the Syrian Church.—March to Diarbekir.—Wadi Zenaar.—Approach to Diarbekir.—The City described.—Walls.—Mosques and Churches.—History.—Population.—Sinjar Mountains.—Dara.—Nisibin.—Sheik Farsee.—Extortion.—Account of Nisibin.—More Extortion.—Journey to Mosul.—Appearance of Mosul.—Description.—Houses.—Bazars.—Coffee-houses.—Churches.—Population.—Government.—Trade.—Climate.—Extent according to Mr. Southgate.—Sinjar District visited by Mr. Forbes.—Yezidee Robbers subdued by Hafiz Pacha.—Til Afar.—Bukrah.—Mirka.—Kirsi.—Kolgha.—Samukhah.—Sakiniyah.—Description of the Country.—Geographical Observations.

We shall now proceed to give some idea of the present state of Mesopotamia and Assyria, as described by modern travellers. Beginning with the former of these provinces, and taking Mr. Buckingham, one of the most recent, as our guide, we cross the Euphrates at Bir. This city, known as the Birtha of antiquity, stands on the eastern side of the Euphrates, just below a bend of that river, which is there about the width of the Thames at Blackfriars' Bridge, and flows to the southward. It contains about 400 houses, five mosques, and from three to four thousand inhabitants. The hill on which it is situated, and from which it is built, is of a hard, chalky substance, so that the whole presents a glaring white mass. A number of caves and grottoes are found among the rocks, which do not, however, appear to have been sepulchral, and are now used by the inhabitants as dwellings, being closed up with masonry in front. In the centre, on a height, appears an old fortification; and the walls and towers of a large castle still crown the perpendicular cliff that faces the water. Mr. Buckingham also observed here many architectural relics in the Roman style. The streets are narrow, though, from their steepness, and the nature of its materials, the

town is unusually clean. The caravan crossed the river on large flat-boats, each carrying four camels, a few horses and asses, with eight or ten passengers, besides about two tons of merchandise. He saw none of those rafts, buoyed upon inflated hides, formerly used on the Euphrates between Armenia and Babylon; but men and boys often passed the stream upon a sheep or goatskin filled with air, embracing it with their hands, and propelling it with their feet, and carrying their clothes on their heads.

From Bir the traveller departed on the 1st of June for Orfa, under the protection of a caravan. The way lay over an uninteresting country of swelling ridges, scantily covered with grass, interspersed in the hollows with a few patches of corn, but without a tree or bush to relieve the monotony of the scene. He compares its appearance to that of the undulating waves of the ocean when subsiding after a tempest. The thermometer at sunrise was 78°; at noon, in the sun, 102°; 96° in the tent; at sunset, 88°; and at midnight, 76°; but the air was dry, fresh, and pleasant. This plain was sprinkled with tents of Turkoman hordes.

On the fourth day of June he reached Orfa, which was approached by a broad paved road, and through an extensive cemetery. This town, which is the capital of Diar Rabiaa, is seated on the eastern side of a hill where it slopes to the plain, so that its western side rises slightly above the opposite quarter. The wall is between three and four miles in circuit, forming an irregular triangle, though Niebuhr thinks it bears a greater resemblance to a square. It is well filled with houses, having few open spaces; but the streets are narrow, and constructed with a paved causeway on each side of a central channel for water. The bazars are amply supplied, and separated, as usual, into departments for the various commodities that are sold or manufactured. The khans or caravansaries are numerous, some of them excellent, and laid out upon a plan calculated to supply the traveller with every necessary: lodging, stabling, food, and water for all purposes are in abundance, and served in the most convenient manner.

Of mosques, distinguished by minarets, there are about fifteen; among which that of Ibrahim ul Khaleel is the most beautiful, though not the largest. This structure, which has received its name from the patriarch Abraham the Beloved, or Friend of God, stands by a lake called

Birket ul Ibrahim ul Khaleel, which is 225 paces long by twenty-five broad, and five or six feet deep. It is filled from a clear and copious fountain that rises in the southwest quarter of the city. At the end where a canal commences, a room has been built overhanging the stream; and at the other extremity, the waters run under a bridge into a smaller channel, which separates into many branches, and are thus dispersed throughout the town. On the south side of the canal is a causeway, and behind it fine gardens, full of mulberry-trees. The one half of the northern bank is occupied by the grand façade of the mosque, which rises from its waters. The centre is a square pile, from which spring three large uniform domes, with a lofty minaret ascending from amid a cluster of tall cypresses. At each end of the edifice are flights of steps, leading down to the water's edge through a series of open arcades. The wings are terminated by two solid masses of building similar to each other; the whole forming one of the most regular structures in Turkey. The lake is full of fine fish, which, being held sacred, and thereby protected, are very tame, and multiply exceedingly.* Bathing, however, is not prohibited, for many men and boys were seen swimming about in it. Another fountain in the vicinity appears to be used in the same way by the females. It is called the Ain el Zilgah, and is a delicious place, bordered with gardens and shady walks.

There are four or five public baths at Orfa, some of them very commodious, with numerous well-supplied coffee-houses and cook-shops. Ice from the summits of Mount Taurus was plentiful, and sold for a farthing a pound. The fruits of the season were the white mulberry, quinces, and apricots; grapes, pomegranates, and pistachio nuts had not yet come in; nor were there either lemons, oranges, or melons to be seen. The environs are embellished by many pleasant gardens; and, from Mr. Buckingham's account, the inhabitants appear to have great enjoyment in them, passing much of their time in giving entertain-

* Mr. Buckingham appears inclined to derive the veneration for these fish from the ancient Syrian worship of Dagon or of Venus under the form of one; but the fact is, that in most of the fountains of the East which are held sacred, the fish are always preserved with care, as partaking of the sanctity which belongs to the hallowed spring.

ments, or sitting under the shade of the trees, smoking, playing on the guitar, and not unfrequently drinking.

The population is stated to be about 50,000, among whom are 2000 Christians, chiefly Armenians and Syrians, who have separate quarters, and 500 Jews; both of these classes are merchants and traders. The costume of the Moslems resembled that of Damascus, being very gay and lively, exhibiting a profusion of bright shawls, fringes, tassels, and embroidery. The women wore white outer robes, with veils of black gauze or horsehair projecting several inches from the face.

The manufactures are limited to a few coarse articles of apparel, such as woollen and cotton cloths. The former resembles the stuff used for sailor's jackets, and is generally of the native brown of the wool, though sometimes dyed with indigo. The latter are of the nature of English dowlas, and are worn either undyed or coloured. When printed, which is done with blocks like those of the Chinese—a tedious and imperfect process—they are used for women's gowns or robes, for shawls to veil the head, bed and sofa covers, and the fronts of the large cushions that form a Turkish divan; but the slowness of the operation renders the article very expensive. They also make a few substantial carpets, haircloth, silk bands and tapes, with some very good saddlery and smith-work.

All classes are subject to that boil or eruption commonly known as the "*bouton d'Aleppe*," and which in many cases greatly disfigures the countenance. It is attributed by some to the quality of the water, by others to the excessive use of raw vegetables, and the large quantities of ice consumed by all classes; but the true cause still remains unknown. Strangers residing for any considerable time in the place are equally liable to it with the natives.

The castle is situated on the summit of a rock, on the southwestern side of the two springs. The ascent to it is by a steep winding path, and the enclosure is nearly a quarter of a mile long by 100 yards broad; but it contains only ruins, among which some fragments of Corinthian columns and other remains indicate the site of ancient fabrics. Two of the pillars are still erect.

The government is conducted by a mussellim, who is deputy of the Pacha of Diarbekir.

Mr. Buckingham enters at great length into the history of this ancient and important city, which in various ages has been known as "Ur" of the Chaldees, Edessa and Callirrhoe of the Greeks, and sometimes as Roha, from Orrhoa, of the Arabs, which is abbreviated into Orha and Orfa. This last appellation is used by all the Turks, and most of the Kurds and Arabs in the neighbourhood. It appears at one time also to have been named Antiochia, from Antiochus Nicator, which Benjamin of Tudela has corrupted into Dakia.

Among the places of note in the neighbourhood, the traveller mentions Haran, about eight hours' distance from Orfa; and agrees with most geographers in considering it as identical with the Charræ or Carrhæ of the Romans, and the Haran or Charran of the Old and New Testaments. Mr. Beke, in his Origines Biblicæ,* inclines to dispute the last point, and to transfer the Haran to which Abraham removed from Ur of the Chaldees to the neighbourhood of Damascus.

For ten days our countryman was detained in Orfa, owing to reports that the road to Mardin was beset by predatory tribes of Arabs—the Wahabees, and afterward the Aneizas—who were plundering all travellers and merchants. But he appears to have passed the time not unpleasantly, being feasted both by Turks and Christians. On the 15th of June, the caravan, upon hearing that the Arabs had removed, took their departure.

After passing through some rich corn-grounds, they entered a dreary waste, called Burreah, or "the open land," observing in their way the towers of Haran, distant about fifteen miles in the southwest, and being frequently alarmed by parties of horsemen. The second day saw them ascending a path among bare hills, pierced with caves and grottoes here and there, from the top of which they enjoyed, both towards the east and west, an extensive view of plains intersected by ridges of rocks. From the stony soil rose a luxuriant growth of wild poppies, with many a useful as well as poisonous herb; venomous reptiles and insects being very abundant. A few trees were once or twice observed; but the land, though bare, was fertile. On the third day the caravan was stopped by a party of Beni

* Page 124.

Melan Arabs, who had taken post upon a plain between the roads to Mardin and Diarbekir, and who laid them under contribution, or, rather, plundered them of a considerable sum by way of tribute. Mr. Buckingham, in his turn, was forced to surrender 1000 piastres, besides 250 more to redeem a favourite sword. The Arabs then gave the party a plentiful feast, though somewhat rudely served; after which, when retiring to their caravan, they found it had been visited in their absence by a party of Turkoman horse. This being an interference with their prey, the Arabs attacked the interlopers, and a battle ensued, which terminated in the recovery of the plundered goods, and in the entire defeat of the intrusive marauders. The victors, it appeared, had shifted their ground from the southward, having been driven from their own haunts by the more powerful tribe of Aneiza.

The remainder of the march to Mardin lay over a wide plain, covered with long grass resembling wheat in ear, and thickly sprinkled with black, porous stones. On the north and northeast were Karahjah Dag and an elevated ridge, on which was the city whither they were bound. Passing through the town of Koach Hassar, containing 5000 dwellings, chiefly occupied by Christians, they reached Mardin by a very steep ascent, which is seldom attempted by those who, merely passing along the road, stop at the village of Soor in the plain below, where they pay the usual transit-duty. From this village an hour carried the travellers to the foot of the hill, and another hour to the town upon its summit, by a very precipitous and neglected road. Mardin, or Kelaat el Mardin, which is translated by some the "Madman's Castle," stands on the top of a limestone cliff, the perpendicular sides of which assist in forming the defences. Here resides the mussellim, with his family, servants, and a guard of fifty soldiers. Below, on the eastern and southern face of the hill, the town is surrounded by a wall leading down from the two sides of the castle, and with it embracing an irregular ascent of about two miles. The houses are placed in ranges above each other, like the seats of a Roman theatre; and the streets, which run along the slope of the hill, are, for the same reason, so many successive causewayed terraces with lateral intersections, these last being in fact flights of steps. The houses, which are built of stone, are of indif-

ferent masonry; the terrace-roofs are all flat; and in the paved courts of the upper stories are large wooden stages, railed around for evening parties, and for sleeping on during the summer months. There are eight mosques, but only one of them large, which has a fine minaret and a ribbed dome, and is said to have been once a Christian church. The population is about 20,000, of which two thirds are Mohammedans, the remainder Jews and Christians. There are also some families of another religious sect, called *Shemseeah*, who, as their name implies, are understood to be worshippers of the sun; although, from having been protected by the Syrian patriarch against Sultan Murad, who purposed to put them to death, they are erroneously regarded as forming part of his flock. This benevolent priest, however, has never been able to obtain the smallest disclosure on the subject of their religion, as they say such a breach of their rules would be visited with the severest punishment by their fellows. They amount to about 1000 families. The governor of this place is a mussellim, and dependant on the Pacha of Bagdad.

Mr. Buckingham visited a convent named Deer Zafferany, near Mardin, where the patriarch resided. His holiness received the traveller with much hospitality, and he had thus an opportunity of witnessing the service of the Syrian Church, which in many respects resembled the Catholic ceremonial. The worship was celebrated with great pomp in the Syriac language by the bishop himself, most superbly dressed in robes of gold-embroidered satin, and assisted by inferior priests in garments of corresponding splendour. But while, thus sumptuously clad, he officiated in a glare of lights before an altar loaded with gold and silver, there stood behind him a young man, meanly clad in Turkish breeches, a coarse patched jacket and tarboosh hanging over his shoulders, who leaned with one hand on the patriarch's crosier, while with the other he held an incense-pot and perfumed his holiness from time to time, uttering the responses alone in a loud voice and very harsh manner. All the offices of the priesthood were performed in a deep recess, across which a curtain was drawn when any change was going on, in order to produce the proper mysterious effect upon the audience. During the elevation of the Host, all the people uttered loud

groans, the boys within screamed vociferously, so as quite to drown the voices of the priests; and this confusion of tongues was still farther increased by the clash of brazen cymbals behind the scenes, so shaken as to resemble peals of loud thunder.

After service the pilgrims were called forth, and all, with heads bare, were invested in succession with a robe of one of the officiating clergymen. A cross was then placed in the right hand, and a taper in the left of each, and all the male part of the congregation walked before them uncovered, the females standing respectfully at some distance. They first encompassed the altar, kissing the curtains, the book, and candlesticks as they passed, and then saluted the cross borne in the hands of the pilgrims, beginning with the eldest, an old man of eighty, and ending with the youngest, a boy not more than ten years of age. The convent was placed, like those near Mosul, on the side of a hill, with high cliffs behind it, all pierced with caves and grottoes, evidently sepulchral.

Finding that the caravan was likely to be detained at Mardin, and there being no other means of travelling from thence in safety to Bagdad, Mr. Buckingham resolved to go to Diarbekir, in the hope of finding in that place some Tartars in the service of government. Descending from the hills into the pleasant Wadi Zenaar, or the "Vale of the Girdle," and then crossing a ridge of hills on the north, they followed the course of another valley, the Wadi Berman—both fertile, well wooded, and cultivated—till it led them into a tract of limestone hills, sprinkled with brushwood, rising nearly to the height of 1000 feet. Another descent brought them to a waving plain that continued to the banks of the Tigris. Being well entertained at Poorang, a Kurdish village of about 100 families, next morning they crossed the river, 100 feet broad and easily fordable. One hour's ride carried them to a point from whence the town of Diarbekir burst upon their view in a very interesting and pleasing manner. It is a fortified city, placed upon a commanding eminence, strong by position as well as art, and presenting a noble group of towers, domes, and minarets. The lofty mountains of Kurdistan, rising in the east, added to the grandeur of the scene, which was farther embellished by gardens, bridges, and summer-houses; and the river, flowing at the foot of the hill on which the

town is built, completed the picture of beauty, wealth, and civilized comfort which the whole country displays.

The rock on which Diarbekir stands is basaltic, and rises from the western bank of the Tigris. The form of the town is nearly a circle of about three miles in circumference. It has four gates, and a citadel at the northeast angle overlooking the river, and affording a noble panoramic view on all sides, from the lofty hills of Armenia towards the north, to the waving country that intervenes between itself and Mardin on the southeast. The walls, which are high and strongly built, are defended by towers at irregular intervals, all constructed of basaltic rock, which gives them so gloomy an appearance as to have suggested the Turkish appellation of Kara Amid, or the Black Amid. These ramparts are in tolerable repair, and there is a formidable battery of guns to the north; but the citadel itself is now in ruins, while the dismounted cannon are half buried in earth and grass.

There are fifteen mosques with minarets, and several others either with or without domes; five Christian churches of the various sects, and a Jewish synagogue; more than twenty baths, fifteen caravansaries, some of them very fine; and numerous bazars, well supplied, but rather mean in their appearance.

The population, according to the latest estimate, amounts to about 50,000, chiefly Osmanlis, of all professions: Armenians, Catholics, Syrians, Greeks, and a very few Jews, make up the rest. The city is the capital of a pacha of three tails, who derives his appointment from Constantinople; and he has at all times had under his command a considerable military force. Since the Kurdish war, and as long as the Turkish territories were threatened by Ibrahim Pacha from Syria, Diarbekir was the headquarters of a large army.

This celebrated place, the Amida of antiquity, was, as we have seen, demolished by Sapor (or Shapoor) in the fourth century; was again destroyed by the Persians in A.D. 505; and afterward sacked by Tamerlane and several succeeding Mohammedan conquerors. Hence it is not surprising that few vestiges of its former greatness remain; still, however, there are fragments of Ionic columns and other relics, which obviously pertain to the period of its ancient glory and prosperity.

Diarbekir appears to have at all times been a place of considerable trade and skilled industry. Buckingham mentions not less than 1500 looms at work, 500 printers of cotton, 300 manufacturers of leather, 100 smiths, and 150 makers of ornamented pipe-stems alone, besides those employed in forming clay balls and amber mouthpieces.

Mr. Brant, the British consul, who visted it in 1835, speaks of its having formerly contained not fewer than 40,000 families, employed numerous artisans, and enjoyed an extensive trade with Bagdad in Indian, and with Aleppo in European produce. But he adds that, within twenty-five years, in consequence of the depredations of the wild Kurdish tribes in the vicinity, who almost held the place in siege, commerce had declined, and manufactures dwindled to a very low condition. Hence the number of houses was reduced to about 8000, of which 6300 were occupied by Turks, 1500 by Armenians, eighty-five by Catholics, seventy by Greeks, and fifty by Jews. Since the establishment of Reshid's authority in the pachalic, matters had begun to mend a little; and nothing but the removal of the depressing causes now mentioned is wanting to render Diarbekir a great commercial city.

Returning to Mardin, Mr. Buckingham pursued his travels to Nisibin, intending to overtake a caravan which he found had left that place the previous day. The track lay to the southward of east, along the plain which stretches by the foot of the Jibel Mardin. On the right were the distant mountains of Sinjar, rising to a great height in the centre, and tapering down at either end till they sink into the plain. On the left hand they observed a large ruined town called Benaweel, near which, in the same direction, but not in sight, lay Dara or Kara Dara, a very important fortress during the wars between the Romans and Persians. The ruins of this celebrated place consist, it is said, of military fortifications, walls, cisterns, and excavated sepulchres; but no traveller* has visited it very recently. Its name seems to vouch for its antiquity, as it appears to have been derived from Darab, an appellation of some of the ancient kings of Persia.

After a brisk ride of forty miles, the party reached the

* Mr. Rich did visit Dara, but his account of it has not been given to the public.

town of Nisibin, where they found the caravan undergoing a heavy extortion, under the name of custom, at the hands of Sheik Farsee, chief of the whole country from hence to Mardin, in which the Englishman and certain Tartars who had joined him were included. This city, not less celebrated than Mardin or Amida, and even, on the ground of tradition, claiming Nimrod for its founder, appears to have been esteemed in former times as of the first importance. Its name has been held equivalent to the Hebrew or Chaldaic word which signifies "a military post;" but some derive it from a Syriac term which denotes "a place of columns." It is situated in a level plain on the western bank of the Mygdonius, now the river of Nisibin, and still exhibits a considerable extent of ruins, among which a small temple of ordinary fabric, having five columns standing; a long, level bridge of Roman architecture, on twelve arches; and a European building, now called the Church of St. James; with the citadel, a heavy, square structure, are the chief. The present town contains not more than 100 houses, built among the ruins, and which are chiefly inhabited by Mohammedans, Arabs, and Kurds, under the government of Sheik Farsee.

From this station the traveller pursued his course, in company with the Tartars and caravan, across the plain of Sinjar, level like a sea, with rocks and islets scattered over its surface. As they pitched their tents near the hills, they were again alarmed by the appearance of fifty well-appointed horsemen, followers of Khalif Aga, the most powerful chief between Orfa and Mosul. The result was a farther levy of *black mail*, to the amount of 2500 piastres, or £125 sterling, besides presents and a considerable extent of secret pillage.

In proceeding over the Berreah or open land, the dark basaltic rock, sometimes porous and sometimes solid, again made its appearance, and continued till hid by a sheet of cultivation which was then under the sickle. The whole tract was called Belled Chitteea, and there were several small Kurdish villages scattered over it. From their night's resting-place at Chehel Aga, the lofty mountains of Al Jeudi were in sight; but the remainder of the road to Mosul was reported so dangerous, that the caravan came to the resolution of hiring eighty Yezidee horsemen to convoy them in safety. The weather was burning hot, the

thermometer at two P.M., under the shade of a double cloak, being 118°; the glare of the desert plain was overwhelming; while the snow-covered mountains of Kurdistan seemed to mock their distress. The consequence was, that, on reaching a stream, the banks of which were so high that the cattle could not get to the water, they broke from all restraint, and camels, horses, and men plunged pell-mell into the ravine, where some were drowned, and much luggage was lost. From this point the caravan, making its way over a succession of small calcareous hills, reached the ruins of Eski, or old Mosul, by noon of the 4th of July. There they rested only till night, after which our countryman continued his progress along with the Tartars to Mosul, which he reached on the morning of the 6th.

The first appearance of this place disappointed his expectations, there being little of the magnificence he had pictured to himself from the descriptions he had heard. He approached it through a succession of barren plains and miserable villages; and, on entering the gates, it struck him as the worst built and altogether the least interesting city he had yet seen in the East.* Nor does this impression appear to have been improved by the two days' examination which he devoted to its edifices. The general aspect is mean; the streets being narrow, irregular, and unpaved. Nor, with one exception, did he see either the fine bazars, mosques, or palaces which might be looked for in such a town. The houses are chiefly constructed of small unhewn stones, cemented with mortar, and plastered with mud; and the walls are generally sloped, like the Egyptian temples, having the angles towards the streets rounded off. Timber being scarce, they have, for the most part, vaulted roofs, on which the terraces are formed. The door and window plates are usually made of marble taken from the neighbouring hills. The style of the arch is the pointed Gothic; sometimes the flatter Norman; seldom the Saracenic.

The bazars, though, with one exception, not so fine as those of Cairo, are numerous and well supplied, but dirty and deficient in symmetry. In one are sold the produce and manufactures of India and Europe.

* Vol. ii., p. 20.

The coffee-houses are large, some having an avenue a hundred yards long, shaded with matting, and furnished with benches on either side for the accommodation of company. There are about thirty baths, but none comparable to those of Cairo, Damascus, or Aleppo. Of mosques there are not fewer than fifty, of which twenty are large; but the most extensive, which is remarkable for a very lofty minaret, is in ruins.

Of Christian churches there are fourteen: five belonging to one set of Chaldeans, and four to another; three of Syrians; one of Jacobites; and one of Roman Catholics. The most conspicuous have already been described.

The population is estimated at nearly 50,000, of whom the greater number are Mohammedans, in equal proportions of Arabs, Turks, and Kurds. Of Chaldeans there are said to be about 1000 families; 500 of Syrians, 300 of Jacobites, and 300 of Jews.

Mosul is the seat of a pacha of two tails, who, though his government is small, receives his investiture from Constantinople. His military force, when the traveller was there, did not exceed 1000 men, chiefly cavalry; but the amount fluctuates according to circumstances. The city is surrounded by a wall, though without cannon. It has a castle towards the river, small and ruinous, on an island formed by the waters of the Tigris, which are let into a wet ditch on the outside.

The trade, once very considerable, has, like that of the whole country, sunk to small dimensions. Gall-nuts from Kurdistan, and Indian goods from Bussora, form the chief staple; and the only manufacture carried on is that of coarse cotton cloths, which, being dyed blue, are used by the lower classes.

Mr. Niebuhr observes that the climate is reputed to be very healthy; the air and water excellent; but that the winter is sometimes very cold. As a proof of this, he states, that the Tigris, about ten years before his visit, had been actually frozen over, and continued so several days. Close to the city there are a number of mineral springs, so strong as sometimes even to taint the waters of the river with a sulphureous flavour. In most respects the account of Buckingham agrees entirely with that of the German traveller.

The Rev. Mr. Southgate,* in 1838, was struck with the extent of this city, but still more with the numerous ruins that met his eye while walking through the streets; the effect, he says, of a famine, which was followed by the plague. One hundred thousand persons, he was informed, were cut off; a number which certainly exceeded its population at any one time. According to his estimate, at that period it contained 40,000 souls. In other respects, his account coincides with those already given.

Since the foregoing portion of this chapter was written, an account has been published in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society† of a journey made from Mosul to the Sinjar Hills by Mr. Forbes, from which, as it throws light upon a part of Mesopotamia hitherto unexplored by Europeans, we extract the following particulars:

The Sinjarli Yezidees being merciless and incessant plunderers, it became necessary for Hafiz, commander of the Turkish forces, and pacha of Diarbekir, in order to prevent a great part of his government from becoming a desert, to reduce them to subjection. This object, after an obstinate resistance, he accomplished in 1837, and appointed a musellim to watch over them on the part of the sultan, permitting them, however, the exercise of their own religion, customs, and laws. The danger of a visit to their country being thus much diminished, Mr. Forbes, after considerable importunity, obtained from the Pacha of Mosul permission to go thither; and, having secured the attendance of a Yezidee sheik, on the 12th of October, 1838, he left Mosul.

During the whole of the first day's march, the way lay along the banks of the Tigris to the village of Ameidat; from whence the party, starting on the morrow, proceeded nearly due west to the town of Til Afar, through a rather flat country, scantily clothed with dry grass and thorny shrubs, in which they passed several deserted villages. Til Afar, the only inhabited place in the wilderness between Mosul and Sinjar, contains about 1000 houses, of which only 700 are inhabited. It is built in four divisions, upon as many steep and rugged hills of limestone rock, from the base of the highest of which issues a stream of

* Narrative of a Tour through Armenia, Kurdistan, Persia, and Mesopotamia, 2 vols. 8vo, London, 1840, vol. ii., p. 237, 238.

† Vol. ix., p. 409–430.

water that turns several rude mills, but, by being used for irrigating the neighbouring gardens, is soon entirely absorbed. Rain-water for drinking is collected in cisterns. There is no bazar, and but a few shops, belonging to the most common class of artisans; such as blacksmiths, carpenters, dyers, and tobacconists. The gardens supply a few vegetables, with figs, pomegranates, and mulberries; and there is a good deal of land cultivated every cold season in the plain, which, however, is very stony and barren in appearance. This place was formerly the resort of all the robbers in the country; but, since its subjugation by Hafiz Pacha, their occupation is at an end, and it is now governed by a Turkish zabit.

Having with some difficulty procured mules here, Mr. Forbes proceeded across the plain in the same direction to Bukrah, the nearest Yezidee station on the hills, passing through the ruined village of Inbarah, on the banks of a small stream. Bukrah, which is pleasantly situated on the northeastern shoulder of the mountain, among large plantations of fig-trees, consists of sixty-five houses, containing about 500 inhabitants. The dwellings rise in rows one above another, and the whole side of the hill, to the very summit, and to the extent of several miles on either side, is covered with vineyards and fig-gardens. The cultivated ground is laid out in flat terraces supported by low stone walls, and water is procured at the base of the acclivity and near the border of the plain, where there is a considerable tract of wheat and barley. Between these fields and the village was the thrashing-floor, formed of stiff, hard clay. The house to which the travellers were taken was particularly neat and clean, and the inhabitants, though inquisitive, were civil and attentive.

From this place Mr. Forbes ascended to the summit of the hill, 1600 feet above the plain, by a steep path winding among huge fragments of rock, and scattered plantations of figs and vines. The view was extensive and grand, comprehending the magnificent vale of Mesopotamia, with Mount Masius in the horizon.

On the 16th he and his attendants left Bukrah on asses —neither mule nor horse being procurable—and proceeded by a very bad road through the valley formed by the outer and inner hills, lined on either hand by fig-plantations, which grew in a thin and scanty soil, from which large

blocks of stone everywhere protruded. After passing for eight miles through cultivated ground of this kind, they reached Mirka, a village consisting of three divisions, with a population of 1200 souls. From thence, continuing their journey westward, they observed a number of ruined villages, one of which, Teppah, stands at the source of the Saluk, a fine stream, which, however, after watering a considerable tract of land, is lost in the desert. In the evening they reached Sinjar, at one time the principal town of the district, but now reduced to about eighty houses. Here were seen an arched building, with round towers, in the Roman style of architecture; and in the plain below, many Mohammedan edifices and tombs, one of which, a fine octagonal minaret of yellow brick, with Arabic inscriptions after the manner of the earlier caliphs, was not less than forty feet high.

Returning to Bukrah, which they again quitted on the 20th, the party took a westerly course, leading through the villages of Nuksi, Yusufah, Keichkah, Gundagaili, Haldinah—each containing from fifteen to twenty-five houses—to Nogri and Amr, in the latter of which they halted for the night. The way lay through a continued plantation of fig-trees; and they saw several *mezars*, or tombs of Yezidee saints. The gardens continued through the whole valley between the outer and inner hills; the former terminating, or, rather, being interrupted for a space, through which the plain reached to the base of the mountain, which is clothed to the top with dwarf oaks and shrubs.

They halted on the 21st at Kirsi, a miserable place, consisting of thirty decayed houses, and divided into two parts by a stream which runs through the dale where it is situated. Their lodging was a mere open shed; but their host, though a truculent-looking personage, received and treated them kindly enough. The people were hospitable, and less inquisitive than usual. This day considerable apprehension was occasioned by the appearance of several parties of the Aneiza Arabs ranging the plain below.

The travellers ascended the ravine in which the village stands to the source of the rivulet just mentioned, a ride of an hour and a half, through very beautiful and romantic scenery, and thence to the village of Kolgha, where there is a sculptured niche, three feet long by one broad, with a basin-shaped cavity at the bottom, respecting which the

Yezidees have neither knowledge nor tradition. Mr. Forbes suggests that, as these hills were once probably inhabited by Christians, this may have been a baptismal font.

The next stage carried the party to the village of Samukhah, in a westerly direction along the base of the mountains, and past the remains of several small towns or hamlets, surrounded by scenery similar to that just described. This place contained 130 houses, and about 1000 inhabitants, and was imbosomed in extensive fig-gardens, which ran a long way up the mountain side. It has no running stream or open spring, but abundance of water is procured from wells.

On the 24th of October they crossed the range of hills, ascending the valley or ravine behind Samukhah by a very steep path among extensive fig-gardens. A thick oak forest stretched beyond these to the very summit, which is here about 1500 feet above the plain; whence they descended by an almost impracticable path to the miserable village of Sakiniyah, containing about 350 inhabitants, the fields belonging to which looked from above like a small patch on the edge of the waste. After halting here to refresh, they returned to Samukhah.

Having completed the survey of every place and village worth notice in the hills, Mr. Forbes with great difficulty procured mules to carry him to Nisibin, distant eighty miles, which he reached on the evening of the second day without accident, though not without alarm from the wandering Arabs. The country resembled that between Til Afar and Bukrah; and the party crossed some marshy ground impregnated with salt, as also the Hassawi, a reedy stream, which, rising in Mount Masius, flows into the Khabour.

Mr. Forbes sums up his account of this hitherto unknown tract by observing that the eastern extremity of the Sinjar Hills is eighty-three miles distant from Mosul, and their western point seventy from Nisibin. The desert around them is covered with grass and thorny shrubs, and includes extensive tracts of barren salt marsh. Southward of Mosul it is dry and sandy, but improves towards Mardin, and near Koach Hassar the soil is very fertile.

The mountainous district of Sinjar, fifty miles long, and from seven to nine in breadth, has been variously subdivi-

ded by Arabs and Yezidees. The northern section, called *Shamali*, though smallest, is by far the most populous, well cultivated, and fertile. It contains sixteen villages, while that named *Kibli*, or the southern, can boast but of nine. Figs and grapes, which are the principal fruits, are good of their kind, especially the former, as they are small and of the white variety.

Mr. Forbes denounces the general inaccuracy of our maps, and particularly as regards Sinjar, the Lake of Khatuniyah, and the course of the Hawali. No stream whatever runs from the northern or eastern sides of the Sinjar Hills more than a few miles into the desert; while towards the northwest, on the way to Nisibin, the first rivulet is the Hassawi, from Aznowar in Mount Masius, which, flowing southwest, joins the Jakhjakhah or Mygdonius. The Lake of Khatuniyah, said to be two hours and a half in length, and one and a half broad, with its village, is situated about thirteen miles west-northwest of Samukhah. The Khabour, rising at Ras ul Ain, directs its course to the neighbourhood of Khatuniyah, where it is joined by the united waters of the Mygdonius and Kokab, and soon after by the Hawali. It then runs southward, passing close to the Sinjar Hills on its way to the Euphrates. The source of the Hawali is two hours northwest of Khatuniyah; and, after proceeding two hours in the direction of west-southwest, it falls into the Khabour.

CHAPTER XII.

Present Condition of Assyria.

Portion of Kurdistan included in Assyria.—Nestorian Christians of Jewar. —Sert.—Colonel Sheil's Journey to Jezirah ibn Omar.—Plain of Mediyad.—Jezirah ibn Omar described.—Its Chief.—Swimming the Tigris.—Skirt the Mountains to Accra and the Zab.—Change of Scenery. —Cross the Zab.—Erbile (Arbela).—Altun Kupri.—Kirkook.—Kufri. —Antiquities.—Tooz Khoormattee.—Kara Teppé.—Aspect of Lower Assyria.—Sugramah Pass, and View from it.—Pachalic and Pacha of Solymaneah.—Present State of the Town.—The Bebeh Tribe of Kurds.—Climate.—Shahrasour.—State and Chief of Rewandooz.—His Rise and Character —Pachalic and Pacha of Amadieh.—Dr. Ross's Description of the Meer, his Camp, Government, Army.—Scheme of executive Justice. — Fate.— Town of Rewandooz.— Nestorians of Jewar.—Their Origin—Numbers—Government.—Face of their Country.—Antiquities at Shahraban.—The Zendan.—Kasr Shireen.—Haoosh Kerek.—General Meanness of Sassanian Ruins.—Kelwatha.— Pachalic of Zohab.—Sir e Pool e Zohab.—The ancient Calah or Hulwan.—Antiquities there.—Royal Sepulchre.

That part of Kurdistan which properly belongs to Assyria comprises only the small state of Sert, Jezirah ul Omar, part of the pachalic of Amadieh, the government of Rewandooz, and the pachalic of Solymaneah. The very remarkable community of Nestorian Christians, who inhabit the vicinity of Mount Jewar, may also be considered as more properly appertaining to this province than to Persian Kurdistan, as the waters from that elevation certainly flow into the Tigris.

Sert, Isert, or Sered, supposed by D'Anville and others to represent the ancient Tigranocerta, was, when visited by Kinneir, governed by a chief subject to the Prince of Zok —a place between Betlis and Diarbekir—so powerful that it was said he could bring no fewer than 20,000 men into the field. In 1836, when Colonel Sheil passed through it, Reshid Pacha had succeeded in establishing the sultan's authority over the ruler of Sert, whose territory he had attached to the government of Diarbekir. The town is described as being situated in a large undulating plain without a single tree, and surrounded at a considerable distance

by high mountains. It is two miles and a half in circuit, encompassed by a wall with various bastions, but ruinous in many places, and having no ditch. A large portion of the enclosed space is void of buildings; and the houses were understood not to exceed 1000, occupied by Kurds, Armenians, and Nestorians. There were three large and several small mosques, two churches, five baths, and one caravansary. The governor's residence is an extensive edifice, sunk in a deep moat which can be filled with water, and has fortifications in abundance. The houses are arched, having very thick walls built with stone and lime. In the midst of each field may be seen a small building, intended for the protection of the property.

Colonel Sheil's object was to get from Sert to Jezirah ibn Omar; but the shortest road through Buhtan, a wild and very mountainous district, being impracticable, owing to the rebellion of its prince, who still held out against Reshid Pacha, he was advised to accompany a party of troops belonging to the latter, who were to go round by the Tigris. They, however, departed without him; and he was under the necessity of hiring a number of mules to relieve his fatigued horses and cattle. A laborious ride brought them to the village of Til, where a chief belonging to the district of Sert gave him and his attendants a good breakfast. While sitting at this meal, they heard several shots, which he afterward learned proceeded from skirmishing parties firing at each other across the river. Near this point they passed the Tigris, 150 yards in breadth, very rapid, and waist-deep. High mountains rose on each hand; but there were several villages, which were surrounded with cultivation, and abundance of vineyards, rice, cotton, melon, and cucumber grounds. Near one, called Chelek, they left the river, which they did not see again till they reached Jezirah ibn Omar. The road was stony, and often very bad; the hills were covered with wood, chiefly stunted oak, fir, holly, and a few elms, with raspberries, barberries, and a profusion of small plants.

The plain of Mediyad, of immense extent, though cumbered with rocks, is crowded with villages, and covered with unirrigated cultivation, although the stones were in some places piled in heaps fifteen feet high. Its inhabitants are Kurds and Yezidees. After rising to the summit of a ridge, a descent of 1500 feet conducted the travellers

to the vast plain that stretches almost uninterruptedly to Bagdad and the Gulf. On this were many mounds scattered, with forts on their tops and villages below; others were entirely bare and solitary. Many of the hamlets had been destroyed by the military operations of Reshid Pacha.

Jezirah ibn Omar, that is, the Island of the Sons of Omar, is surrounded by the Tigris, and presents a town of the same name, the ancient Bezabde. It occupies nearly the whole surface, which is about two miles and a half in circumference, and is encompassed by a low ruinous wall of an oval shape, without a ditch. The arm of the river which forms the island was at that time (August 3) not more than a few yards broad, and only ankle-deep. It was formerly spanned by a bridge, of which five arches still remain; both it and the walls being built of square black stones. The main stream, more than 100 yards broad, flows on the other side, and was formerly crossed by a bridge of boats. Shut in between high banks, the heat is extreme; not a tree enlivens the vicinity; and the town, ruined by plague, cholera, and the army of Reshid Pacha, presents a scene of utter desolation. It had been the seat of a Kurdish chief, who used to plunder or levy contributions on all caravans. Macdonald Kinneir was imprisoned and heavily fined by this savage, who thought fit to set Reshid at defiance; upon which the pacha seized his capital, and, for this reason, he was now in rebellion in the opposite district of Buhtan. Not a soul was to be found in the town, nor a hovel to shelter the travellers; wherefore, swimming their horses across the Tigris five miles below, they continued their descent upon the left or Assyrian shore.

Colonel Sheil, being desirous to join the army of Reshid Pacha, left the road to Mosul on the right, and, keeping close to the foot of the hills, pursued his way by Al Kosh, Akereh, and Zebari to the Zab, which he crossed at a small village on its western bank. Al Kosh has been already described. The party passed through many Yezidee villages, and found the people uniformly civil and hospitable. The road, though hilly and bad, is practicable even for cannon; the heat and glare were excessive, but there was no want either of cultivation or inhabitants. Akereh is a town of 500 houses, surrounded by fine gardens, and defended by a very strong castle on a rock which

projects from the El Khair range of mountains; but the garrison surrendered to Reshid on finding themselves within range of a couple of guns brought to bear on them from the plain.

The country here presented a delightful contrast to that which the travellers had just left. Villages were ensconced in clefts of the rock, surrounded by trees and gardens, and torrents gushing from the hills crossed the path; the El Khair Mountains became lower and more verdant, while grapes, figs, and walnuts grew wild in the valleys. On the 14th August they passed the Zab, 100 yards broad, rapid and deep, upon a raft composed of inflated skins and branches of trees, guided by two men, each with large calabashes under his arms, to assist him in swimming.

Erbile, the celebrated Arbela, is a large artificial mount, sixty or seventy feet high, 300 yards in length by 200 in breadth, crowned by a brick wall with bastions and a few small guns. Beneath there is another town; but both are very ruinous, and there are no remarkable remains except those of an immense brick pillar, which is probably Mohammedan, standing alone in the plain. When the place belonged to the Meer of Rewandooz—who took it from the Pacha of Bagdad—and was visited by Dr. Ross on his way to Accra, it was prosperous and flourishing; but resistance having been made to the sultan's troops who attacked it, a siege took place, a mine was sprung, the garrison surrendered, and the town suffered severely for its imprudence, although it is still said to contain about 6000 people. The plain, which extends to Altun Kupri, though much covered with small stones, is capable of producing fair crops, and is in some parts well cultivated. In May, when Ross passed it, the surface was adorned with flowers and rich verdure, which, however, soon fade under the parching heat.

Altun Kupri, the "Golden Bridge," is situated on an island in the Lesser Zab, which is crossed by the bridge that gives its name to the place; and the town, which was taken by the Meer of Rewandooz, reverted to the pacha on the fall of that chief. It once contained 8000 inhabitants, but has been greatly thinned by plague and famine.

The road from hence to Kirkook, the Corcura of Ptolemy, lies over a stony plain, intersected with numerous

ridges, but also interspersed with patches of cultivated land, like most of Lower Assyria. The town is by Buckingham divided into three portions. The first, in which there is a castellated mount resembling that at Arbela, contains about 5000 inhabitants, all Moslems. There the governor resides; and the minarets of three mosques are seen from below. The second portion, which is spread out under this castle, affords dwellings, it was said, to 10,000 souls, a mixture of all descriptions of people—Armenians, Nestorians, Syrians, Christians, and Moslems. It possesses all the caravansaries, coffee-houses, and bazars, having also a large cemetery attached to it. The third portion, which is rather a suburb, being at the distance of four furlongs, is small. The population of the whole, which was then probably overrated at 15,000, is now not half that number. The most remarkable objects about Kirkook are the naphtha wells, which abound in its vicinity, and the subterranean fire which bursts forth at a place called Baba Gurgur. The former are situated in the low gypseous hills about three miles northward, many of them in the bed of a small stream which issues from the rocks. They are nearly three feet in diameter, some of them eight or ten feet deep, and emit a very disagreeable smell. The naphtha, which is perfectly black, liquid, and in quantity inexhaustible, is sent all over the country for various purposes, besides that of giving light. Baba Gurgur is a small spot, whence in the night sulphureous flames are seen to arise, particularly after rain, no doubt from the evolution of sulphuretted hydrogen gas. But at all times, by thrusting a stick into the soil, a blaze bursts forth, sufficiently powerful to boil water or cook meat.

The character of the country as far as Kufri is similar to that already described; plains, either gravelly or of rich alluvium, intersected by rocky and gypseous ridges, green with luxuriant pasture in spring, and brown in summer and autumn. The town, which is neat-looking and walled, is situated at the mouth of a ravine, where a little stream forces a passage through a range of gypseous hills of a singularly barren and forbidding appearance. About half a mile eastward of this place, in the bed of the rivulet, Mr. Rich found some ruins called Kara Oghlan, which, on examination, he considered to be Sassanian, the remains of buildings resembling those of Kasr Shireen.

Among them were ornaments in gypsum, coloured earthenware, jars, sepulchral urns, coins, and antiques ; and the inhabitants ascribe their origin, as usual, to the ghiaours or infidels. Sepulchral chambers, like those of the Nakshi Rustam in Persia, were observed farther up the course of the small river. Eski Kufri, an old site, two hours southwest of the present town, exhibits a great extent of mounds, fragments of urns, and vestiges of buildings like those of the Kasr Shireen. One of the mounds resembled the Mujelibé, with sides almost perpendicular, except where furrowed by the rains. It was fifty-seven feet high, about 960 feet long from north to south, and nearly as much from east to west. In it was found a vault, with fragments of urns, human bones, and fine pottery ; but the time did not admit of a strict examination.

On the road from Kirkook to Kufri, and in the same gypseous hills, is situated Tooz Khoormattee, just where the Ak-su pierces them. Here, too, are naptha pits, which are productive and valuable, and generally found at the edge of the gypsum debris on the side of the streams. At this place, the date-tree, which is uncertain in point of produce at Kufri, bears particularly well ; though Buckingham states that the heat at three P.M. was 125°, and the wind suffocating.

After passing Kara Teppé, where there is a succession of low hills, the country becomes rich as far as the foot of the Hamrine range. These consist of several ridges of sandstone rocks, and, as we have seen, extend far on either side to the northwest and southeast. From the southern side, the country to Bagdad is entirely alluvial and very fertile, comprising the districts of Khalis and Khorasan, the richest, perhaps, in the pachalic.

The following description* of the appearance of Lower Assyria, and of the pass which leads to it from Solymaneah, may convey to the reader a tolerable idea of the aspect of this country.

The pass† is very striking. The mountains, of which I have spoken as forming the boundary between the highlands of Kurdistan and the plain of Assyria, which extends to the Tigris, here form a line running about south-

* From Travels in Kurdistan and Mesopotamia, by the author of this work.

† That of the Sugramah.

east and northwest, and are composed of many strata of limestone and calcareous conglomerate, with intervening beds of gravel and indurated sandstone. One of these strata, of enormous size and great height, rises on their northeast face, and, running straight as a line for forty or fifty miles, perhaps, separates them from the irregular valley in which we had been travelling. Its crest rises thin and sharp; and the angle of its *dip* is so near a right angle, and its face is so free from soil, that, at a little distance, you would take it for an unbroken precipice of sheer hard rock.

Yet, continuous as it appears, the ledge is not unbroken. There are gaps in several places, made by the streams which rise in the range, and which have forced outlets for their waters. Before one of these we now stood, collecting our forces, watering our horses, and tightening the bands of our loads, preparatory to grappling with the ascent which awaited us. The ledge or stratum I have mentioned narrowed to an apparent thickness of not many yards, and shooting up at once, like a gigantic flagstone on end, from the broken ground at its foot, had been shattered and severed to an extent which above might be 100 yards, but beneath was only sufficient for the passage of the stream. A bridge, under which the waters find their way, and which affords to travellers the means of crossing the boundary, unites the dissevered stratum, the wounded sides of which rise in the most grotesque and ragged forms to the height of several hundred feet. Just beyond, other strata, divided in the same manner, but with less prominent edges, rise in forms to the full as picturesque; and the whole was spotted with oak bushes, rich in their autumnal tints. It formed, on the whole, a wild and grotesque rather than a magnificent landscape; for it lacked that moisture and consequent verdure which is so essential to beauty in mountain scenery. Still it was striking. The ascent occupied an hour and a half; and at length we stood on the top, looking back, on one hand, to the wild mountainous country we had passed; on the other, over the lower lands we had yet to traverse before we could reach the celebrated capital of the caliphs. *Lower*, I say, not *level;* for the country over which our eyes roved was anything but level, although in relative altitude far inferior to that which we had left. Low ridges of dark craggy hills rose in succession, the ter-

mination of which we could not discover from the thickness of the atmosphere; and the space between the ridges appeared in like manner to be intersected by small hillocks and ravines. It was a black and dreary prospect; yet this was the land of Assyria Proper, the cradle of mighty empires, and the birthplace of the greatest monarchs of the olden time. Certainly no one, regarding it as we now did, would have imagined this scorched and rocky desert to be the country of the great Semiramis or the luxurious Sardanapalus, however fit he might esteem it for the abode and domain of "Nimrod the mighty hunter." Yet such, as we saw, is, I believe, the greater part of the country on the left bank of the Tigris, near the hills, from Mosul or Nineveh down to Khanekin and Mendali, the southern boundary of the ancient province of Assyria. Around Mosul, Erbile, Kirkook, and some other places, there is, no doubt, a circuit of richer country; but a large proportion of the whole is desert, and scarcely fitted by nature to be otherwise.

From Zallah, a march of twenty-two to twenty-four miles led us to Ibrahim Khanchee. The first six miles were over one of the most singularly stony tracts I ever saw; but the quantity of herbage that had, nevertheless, sprung up in spring and summer, was astonishing. A portion of this still remained, while the greater part, having been set fire to, had left a wide black surface, thickly speckled with the gray stones, and not a leaf or bush in view: a most unlovely prospect. We were now fairly in the country of ancient Assyria, and verily there was little in its aspect to suggest ideas of a vast and powerful empire. One's reason refused to be persuaded that the wide tracts of gravel and black earthy hillocks that lay stretched around us, with the rock protruding from their sides and summits, intersected with dry ravines, all obviously unproductive save of a scanty pasturage, could ever have been the theatre of those mighty events which history relates—where hosts of innumerable warriors struggled for victory and empire. Such are the impressions made upon a traveller's mind by the first sight of Assyria in the end of autumn; nor does the prospect brighten on a more lengthened acquaintance.

The pachalic of Solymaneah, which we are supposed to have just quitted, consists principally of one large irregu-

lar plain or valley, extending from the district of Khoee on the Zab, to the extremity of Shahrasour, which includes the southwest side of the Kurdish Hills, with their subordinate glens; while towards the plain it stretches as far as the governor could enforce his authority. The Pacha of Solymaneah is the head of the Bebeh Kurds, an ancient family or clan descended from a chief called Solyman Baba or Bebeh, who lived as feudal lord at Pizhdur, a district in the mountains on the frontiers of Persia. They were cadets of the Soran tribe, and survived the fall of their chief. Before the time of the great Solyman, pacha of Bagdad, all the low country from Altun Kupri and Erbile, on the one hand, to Zengabad, Mendali, and Bedraee Jessan, was in possession of the Bebehs; but, being worsted in their disputes with that great warrior, they were driven farther into the hills. The Bebeh ascendency increased again in the time of Abdulrahman, whose rule commenced A.D. 18, but who had to maintain himself against the attacks of the Persian prince of Kermanshah as well as against the Pacha of Bagdad, but who, after various fortunes, succeeded in establishing his independence. Unfortunately, his two sons, Mahmoud and Solyman, entered into a contest with one another for the chieftainship, which terminated in the destruction of their country; for at length the aid of Persia was called in, and the prince royal, too happy to grasp at the obvious means which such an appeal presented to him of obtaining virtual possession of the disputed territory, sent his troops to assist Solyman, who has lately been recognised as the sovereign under Persian protection; a whole regiment, with a party of artillery, being quartered at the town of Solymaneah.

Even during Mr. Rich's visit at that place, the family troubles had begun, and the pacha's perplexity was often a subject of concern to that gentleman, who speaks of the rebel chief as a very amiable person. His distress, however, though aggravated by the death of his second son, a delightful child, by no means occasioned any relaxation in his efforts to amuse and entertain his English guest, who bears high testimony to his kindness and hospitality.

At that time the country was tolerably well peopled and prosperous. The town, which is only of recent origin (the capital having formerly been at Karacholan), contained 2000 houses, chiefly belonging to Mohammedans;

six caravansaries, five mosques, and as many baths. Since that period, war, extortion, cholera, and plague have wrought a miserable change. The following is a later sketch of the condition of this once prosperous pachalic:

A couple of marches had brought the travellers from Sardasht, a town upon the Ak-su (which rises near Lahijan), to the neighbourhood of Solymaneah. Only a single inhabited village had been seen in all that way, though the ruins of many which had been lately abandoned met the eye on all sides. The approach to the capital is thus described: If the depopulation on the road was depressing, there was little to cheer us on approaching or entering the town. I never beheld a more miserable collection of hovels and ruins. We rode through a mass of rubbish up to what had been the pacha's house, or *palace*, if you will. It was as in utter ruin; uninhabitable except in one small corner, where his harem was bestowed. He himself occupied a tent outside the town. I had sent a man forward to secure for us a lodging. After a while he found us picking our way among the rubbish and broken walls, seeking for some one who might tell us *where anybody* might be found. He led us to the place appointed for us —a perfect wreck—through a labyrinth of mud heaps which had once been houses. It had been the residence of some great man, a relative of the pacha, who at this time was absent at Tabriz. It was well for him. Such as it was, we had it all to ourselves. It was one great mass of mud; a dozen open spaces that had once been chambers, surrounding a large rambling hall, with a great square hole in the middle, intended as a water-cistern.

On the following morning I strolled out to see the town. Certainly my first impressions of its wretchedness were in no degree weakened by farther observations; all was misery, and filth, and abomination. Not one decent habitation was to be seen. None of the people, high or low, have had the heart—or means, perhaps—to repair their ruined houses; so that the huts that have arisen upon the ruins of the old ones are of a meaner description than usual. I was told that there were still from 1000 to 1500 families residing in Solymaneah; but, to judge from appearances, I should think even the first number overrated.

The dominant tribe of this pachalic, the Bebehs, may

amount, it is said, to 4000 families; but their subject tribes are larger and more numerous. The Jaffs are stated to exceed 10,000 houses, and to be able to send forth 2000 horsemen and 4000 musketeers; while the Hamadawnuds, the Tohtiawnuds, the Jelalawnuds, the Daloos, and many others, all claim the protection of the Pacha of Solymaneah. Besides these, which are nomades, there are the fixed inhabitants of the villages, who, before being thinned by plague and misery, formed a considerable body; so that the state, though not very extensive, yet possessing a very large proportion of rich soil, might, if under good government, be not only prosperous, but powerful.

The climate of Solymaneah is by Mr. Rich said to be intensely cold in winter, especially when the easterly wind prevails. Snow sometimes lies on the ground for six weeks or two months. The weather in summer is pleasant, except when the same wind blows, which it does with violence, sometimes eight or ten days successively. This unwelcome breeze is called the *sherki*, and, coming from the mountains by which the valley is surrounded, and which in winter are covered with snow, and in summer baked in the sun's rays, is either very cold or very hot, according to the season, and is much dreaded. Singular enough to say, its range extends but twelve or fourteen miles in any direction. The district of Shahrasour, where a great deal of rice is grown, is said to be extremely unhealthy; and Mr. Rich's party found Beestan, situated in the hills, equally so.

Towards the southeastern extremity of Solymaneah, where it opens out into a wider plain, are seen mounds marking the sites of ancient buildings, which give their name of Shahrasour to the district and that part of the valley. These, or some of them, certainly represent the Seazurus, which was visited by Heraclius in his march after the defeat of Khoosroo Purveez and capture of Destagerd; and Mr. Rich intended to go thither and examine them. This, however, he was prevented from doing, and the task remains still for some future traveller to complete. From natives it is seldom possible to gather any certain information on such subjects; but the present writer did hear thus far, that on the plain, which is bounded by very rugged mountains, there are five or six positions presenting ancient ruins; one called the *Khallah*, or for-

tress, a large and lofty mound; *Yasseen Tepeh*, *Goolumber*, *Arbut*, and *Kharabeh* were also mentioned; and it was said that stones of great size, and bearing inscriptions, had been occasionally dug up. A *Boot Khaneh*, or image-temple, was also spoken of as existing in the same plain, in which was a slab covered with unknown characters. Mr. Rich, who heard nearly the same account, entertained no doubt that Arbut, where the most considerable mounds are met with, is the ancient Shahrasour, though he admits that all the Kurds deny there ever was a city of that name, which they maintain applies to the district only.

The state of Rewandooz, the ruler of which rose lately into much importance, was formerly very small, consisting of not more than a dozen villages, governed by a petty chieftain, who acknowledged allegiance to the Pacha of Solymaneah, his neighbour. This personage, Meer Mustapha, resigned the care of his little province to his son Mohammed, because, as some say, he discerned in the young man the symptoms of a superior greatness and good fortune, which he, rather inclined to quiet and contemplation, did not desire to pursue. Others pretend that this self-denial on the part of the father was brought about by the son, from motives of ambition. They also insist that the total blindness which soon after fell upon the old man was produced by the *meel*, or red-hot pencil held to the eyeballs—a common operation in the East. But the last assertion, at all events, is false, because the abdicated ruler himself told Dr. Ross, who had been sent for by the prince to cure his parent, that the calamity had been occasioned by his own imprudence, in placing a cap of snow upon his head when overheated by ascending a mountain.

Mohammed, who, at the time of that gentleman's visit in 1833, was about forty-five, began his career by taking a small fortress called Seetuc, near Ooshnoo, from Persia. He would soon have been forced to abandon his conquest, but immediately after broke out the war with Russia, which, obliging the prince-royal to withdraw all his troops to oppose the more powerful foe, enabled the Meer of Rewandooz to extend his territories at the expense of his neighbours. Solymaneah, torn by civil broils, could oppose no effectual resistance to this warlike chieftain, who accordingly wrested place after place from the pachalic until he had taken Kirkook and Erbile, and made himself

master of the whole country as far as the vicinity of Mosul. He then attacked the pachalic of Amadieh, a fertile and populous district, lying in the mountains that overhang the Assyrian plains; a region proverbial for its fertility and beauty. The pacha, who, according to Mr. Rich, is of the family of Bahdinan, the noblest among the Kurds, and who, as having some connexion with the caliphs, assumes a peculiar sanctity as well as dignity, lived in greater state than all other chiefs, and arrogated the most profound obsequience. No one dared to use the same pipe, cup, or bath; he always sat alone; and dined so strictly in private that none of his servants were allowed to see him eat. Sometimes he even rode out with a veil over his head, to prevent profane eyes from looking on his august countenance. But, when in want of money, he sunk these high honours, and begged from the chiefs under his authority in the form of a stranger soliciting hospitality.

This ruler, of a high line and ancient family, was unable, however, to resist the arms of the Meer of Rewandooz, who could now, as was asserted, muster from 30,000 to 50,000 hardy musketeers, kept by him in constant pay. By means of these, as well as by sowing dissension in the pachalic, he first overran the country, and then, by a similar process, having seduced a nephew of the reigning pacha, he got possession of the capital, Amadieh. At the time of Ross's visit, however, he was encamped, with about 10,000 men, before Accra, a very strong fortress which he had just taken by assault, not having as yet proceeded against the metropolis.

The doctor describes his camp as having few pretensions to military order. Each *ashayer*, or clan, was pitched around its chief, in separate groups at will, so that the whole were spread to an extent which, according to the rules of European tactics, would have accommodated 50,000 men. The only approach to regularity was in the disposition of his personal guards, a body of 3000 warriors, well armed, who were encamped close to his tent. Yet there was no want of a certain species of discipline: not a sound was heard; and every man could, at the appointed signal, be at his post in five minutes. The men, of their own accord, were continually exercising at marks;

and from 100 to 200 of the soldiers, invited from different tribes, dined every evening in their sovereign's pavilion.

The pacha is described as a benevolent and pleasing-looking man, fair, marked with the small-pox, and blind of an eye, which was opaque and depressed. His beard was about twelve inches long, of a light-brown colour, the lower half being uncombed, and quite felted together, though, in other respects, he was rather tidy in his dress. He was lame of one leg, from the kick of a horse, and spoke with a weak voice.

But the most singular circumstance respecting this chief is the great moral change which he effected in the provinces which he had subjected to his sway. Instead of being, as formerly, a community of robbers, who could not see a traveller pass without attempting to plunder and strip him, and who, as they said of themselves, would "cut a man's throat for an egg in his hand," there is not a theft committed in the country. The practice of robbery was cut short by a summary process. Whoever was caught possessing himself of the goods of others, was punished on the spot, or put to death without mercy. For the first offence, according to circumstances, an eye, a hand, or the nose was the forfeit; for the second, some severe mutilation; but the third offence was always punished with death. This decree, fearlessly and unsparingly enforced, has had so powerful an effect, that, were a man to see a purse of gold upon the road, he would not touch it, but give notice to the head of the next village, who would take care of the property, and report to the chief in person. A striking instance of the meer's inflexible adherence to stern justice is given in his behaviour to his own favourite brother, who, in riding by a poor man's garden, had plucked a pomegranate without asking its owner's permission. Upon hearing of this, he charged his relative with the theft, which was not denied. The chief sternly rebuked him, as if it had been a heinous crime, and demanded which hand he had made use of to perpetrate the act. The young man held forth the hand. "And with which finger did you first touch the fruit?" "With this," said the culprit. "Then let that finger be cut off immediately," said the meer; and the sentence was carried into execution on the spot. Nor was he less unrelenting on such occasions to strangers. A tribe of the Tace Arabs had settled in his territory, having been

driven across the Tigris by the Jerbah; and he had granted them permission to reside there on condition of observing the rules of his government. For some time the sheik did so; but, getting tired of inaction and an honest life, and being tempted by the appearance of a small caravan, his habitual propensities proved too strong, and he plundered it. But, ere the evening of the next day—before he had well counted his gains—half a dozen Kurds rode up to his tent, and, without either explanation or ceremony, struck off his head at his own door, and then quietly withdrew.

The career of Mohammed was rapid and fortunate, so long as his enterprises were carried on against conterminous states and pachas; but the condition of Kurdistan, and the disorders of its inhabitants, in a country so nearly bordering upon Syria—then occupied by Ibrahim Pacha's troops, who threatened farther encroachments on the sultan's territory—had forced the Porte to send an army into these parts under Reshid Pacha. Though the meer, had he been faithfully served, might, secure in his mountainous regions, have defied the whole troops of the empire, yet, when the inhabitants found themselves actually opposed to the arms of the sultan, to the *Sanjak Shereef*—the holy banner, which all true Sonnees regard as the palladium of their faith—the hereditary reverence for this venerated symbol overcame their fear or regard for their military chief, and they fled, or refused to fight against the sacred ensign. Their leader, now powerless and despairing, gave himself up to the Ottoman general, by whom he was sent in chains to Constantinople. After a few month's detention, the Porte, acting, or pretending to act, on the suggestion of certain European advisers, sent back the meer, as was understood, complimented with a *khelut* of investiture to the government of his own territories, as being more likely, from this act of leniency, to prove faithful to his sovereign. But he was not destined to reach his home, for on the way he was put to death—no doubt by secret orders—and his brother succeeded to his dominion and to his hatred of the Osmanlis.

Dr. Ross, who travelled through his territory in May and June, 1833, speaks in high terms of its beauty and improved condition, which offered a strong contrast to the desolate state of the country still under the Turkish rule. The vil-

lages were often hid in perfect forests of gardens; and the hills, where not under corn, were covered with low oak, wild almond, and other shrubs. Rewandooz itself is a poor town of 2000 houses, surrounded by a fortified wall, in a hollow of the mountains on the southern bank of the greater Zab. It commands a rude bridge formed over that river, resting on two stone piers, and covered with branches of trees and earth. The stream not being fordable, caravans cross at this point, which enables the meer to levy a considerable income by way of impost on the transit of merchandise.

Not more than three days' journey westward from Ooroomia of Persia, and little more than one from Rewandooz, lie the mountains of Jewar, and the country* inhabited by a race of Christians of the Nestorian creed. They are said to have retreated from Mesopotamia into those wild regions late in the sixteenth century, in consequence of a schism or feud between two rival patriarchs. The most probable accounts fix their numbers at about 14,000 families, who, though divided into three or more separate tribes, form a sort of commonwealth under certain patriarchal chiefs or bishops, by them termed *khaleefehs*. Of these, the principal, named Mar Shemaoon, resides at Kojannis, a monastery among the mountains, where he maintains great state, and exercises over his subjects a perfect authority in temporal as well as spiritual affairs. But every village has its khaleefeh or priest, who acts also as magistrate; besides which, mention is made of intermediate prelates, who are said to reside at other places, and command high respect.

These tribes are represented as being rich, and living in great comfort, their country abounding in all sorts of produce, both vegetable and mineral. They pay a nominal respect or obedience to the Hakkari Kurds, the chief of whom resides at Julamerik. But, in point of fact, they are quite independent, very jealous of their freedom, and well able to defend it; for they can muster 12,000 musketeers, while their territory, a cluster of lofty mountains intersected by deep ravines, is singularly defensible. These chasms, the beds of rapid torrents, are spanned by a single tree,

* This is by some called the Teearee country; but the name properly applies to one of the tribes of these Christians, not to the country.

which, either being removed or let down at one side, the approach of an enemy is absolutely debarred.

Nor is it alone the singular character of its people and the wildness of its scenery that render this country so interesting; for here probably are to be found the most ancient manuscripts of the Syrian Church, particularly on biblical subjects. It is satisfactory to be able to add, that these treasures are now in a fair way of being brought to light, as an expedition, lately sent out by the Royal Geographical Society of London, for the purpose of discoveries in those regions, have been instructed to direct their especial attention to ecclesiastical records.

There is yet one district of Assyria undescribed, which possesses no mean claim upon the attention of the antiquary: that, namely, which is embraced between a line drawn from the pass of Kerrend to Kufri on the one hand, and by Mendali to the site of Ctesiphon on the other. It is rich in vestiges of antiquity, though most of the remains hitherto traced are only of the Sassanian era. It was first explored by Mr. Rich, and subsequently, to a certain extent at least, by Major Rawlinson. The former gentleman, leaving Bagdad, crossed the Diala at Bakouba, a large village, on his way to Shahraban, in the vicinity of which many of the antiquities are found. Five miles towards the south lie the ruins called the *Zendan*, or prison; but at a point about half way, the guide conducted him to a place called Eski Bagdad. Here are the remains of a town as large as Ctesiphon, the walls in the same style, the southwestern parts being the most perfect, and the interior filled with rubbish. Between these ruins and the Zendan were seen two parallel Sassanian walls, running northeast and southwest, 600 feet long, and about as much apart, of the same composition as the structures at Seleucia, having between each tier of bricks a layer of reeds. Mr. Rich pronounces these ruins to be certainly much older than Islamism, and has little hesitation in considering them to have belonged to the Destagerd of Khoosroo Purveez, which was taken by Heraclius.

The Zendan is described as a very interesting ruin, built with great solidity of burned brick and mortar. In form it is an oblong square, 1600 feet long by about forty-seven feet broad,* and not less than sixteen feet ten

* Rich's Koordistan, vol. ii., p. 254.

inches high. On the eastern side there are twelve round towers or buttresses, in the curtain between each of which are three pairs of loopholes. The western side presents only a dead wall, with a niche ten feet six inches high, with pointed arches opposite each tower on the other side. The last niche, being the only perfect one, was forty-one feet and a half deep, and terminated in a narrow passage faced with a dead wall. On the northern side are four towers, but quite in ruins. Towards the south are the remains of some other buildings, and on the west the whole country is covered with broken bricks. Not one of these have inscriptions, nor are there any unburned bricks or reeds to be seen. Mr. Rich concludes that this singular ruin must have been a royal sepulchre. It is remarkable that a Chinese copper coin was found here.

Crossing first the Hamrine range to a wide level, called Deshteh (a word signifying *the* plain), the party reached Kizzelrebat, where there are mounds and vestiges, but of little interest; and then, winding through a range of low, broken hills, they descended gradually into the plain of Khanekin, which, though very gravelly, is green, partially cultivated, and tolerably productive. From this point to Kasr Shireen, the road lies among eminences of loose conglomerate, with occasional sandstone ridges; and at the latter place the ruins of Khoosroo's palace are to be seen. These, however, present more to disappoint than to please the traveller; for nothing now remaining bears the appearance of grandeur either in dimension or design. "On the brow of the hill behind the caravansary," says Mr. Rich, "is a square enclosure like a fort, and surrounded by *globular*-looking buildings, if I may be allowed the expression, one of which remains perfect in the inside. It is of small dimensions, and something like an inverted cone. The architecture is of the rudest description, and seems merely to be composed of round, large pebbles, heaped together without any attention to order, in an immense thick bed of coarse mortar." There are the fragments of a bridge of the same architecture over a torrent near the town. To the north of this is a square building facing the cardinal points, fifty-three feet in every direction, and about forty high, with an arched doorway in each face. The roof, which was a dome, has fallen in. The building is of the same rude masonry just described,

but had been faced with coarse red bricks, with which the windows and doors are also pointed. On the north and south are small square courts, with little cells on each side of them, but quite ruined; and on the east is a long series of narrow apartments, which seem to have been vaults.

This may have been the portico of some edifice, often in ancient times of greater dimensions, and formed of more solid materials than the buildings to which it led. Mr. Rich mentions another ruin about the centre of the town, which he considers the principal one in point of superficial extent. It appears to have been a large platform, supported by arches forming cells, and very narrow passages. On the western end of the south side are the ruins of what seems a portico, with a gate at each extremity. The north side is open, displaying various cells and compartments. On the east and north the platform is entire, and has on each side a double staircase, underneath which the vaulted support on which it rests may be clearly seen. The longest side does not exceed 200 feet, and from eight to ten feet in height. Another enclosure within the town, with an arched gateway built of large pieces of sandstone, and fifteen feet broad, may, it is thought, have been a tank or reservoir in front of the palace. Besides these principal ruins, there are the remains of walls and courts, extending, as the people of the country say, to an immense distance, as well as traces of aqueducts. But the mountainous character of the whole region shows that this can only have been, what tradition calls it, a hunting-seat of the great monarch; and Mr. Rich is undoubtedly right when he concludes that it is not at Kasr Shireen, that is, the Palace of Shireen (mistress or wife of Khoosroo), that we are to look for Destagerd.

Turning westward from this place, the traveller next pursued his way ten or twelve miles "over wild hills and among Kurdish tribes" to Haoosh Kerek, a ruin much like Kasr Shireen, but less decayed, so that the plan was more comprehensible. The building which bears that name consists of a platform supported on vaults or cells, which are a great resort of robbers, and are blackened internally by the smoke from the fires of those who frequent them. It is an oblong square, of which the northern side, including the remains of what is called the Kasr, measured 340 feet, the length from east to west being about double

that from north to south. It is a multitude of small rooms in ruins, all built of round pieces of sandstone, with which the country is covered. There are some other edifices, similar in fabric and character, but meriting no minute description. Mr. Rich considers this, as well as the Kasr Shireen, to have been one of the monarch's many hunting-seats and parks, but observes that neither these, nor anything else that he had seen of Sassanian erection, are calculated to give any high idea of their taste or magnificence. "When richly painted, gilded, and ornamented, they might have been worth seeing: in their present state of ruins they are certainly not imposing." Assuredly, except the arch and hall at Ctesiphon, there are no Sassanian remains that convey to the beholder any idea of much magnificence and taste; and though, doubtless, the sculptures on the rocks at Shapoor, Naksh e Roostum, Tauk e Bostam, and Bessittoon, are curious, they dwindle into insignificance when compared with the stupendous structures of Egypt, Greece, and Rome, or even with the venerable remains of Persepolis.

These are the principal vestiges of antiquity in this district; others are mentioned, but of less importance, and therefore need not be more particularly noticed. Kelwatha, a heap of extensive mounds at the confluence of the Diala and Tigris, has been already alluded to. Among these eminences was picked up a small, thin brick, of nearly four inches long, on which was impressed a figure, tolerably well executed, of a female arrayed in the Babylonish dress, with a flower in one hand, and an animal of some sort in the other. The dress is flounced up to the waist, and the hair falls back in long curls.

In describing the River Diala, mention has already been made of the pachalic or district of Zohab, which occupies a triangle at the foot of the ancient Zagros, bounded on the northwest by the course of the current, there called the Shirwan, on the east by the mountains, and on the south by the stream of Hulwan. Although forming one of the ten pachalics dependant on Bagdad, it was wrested from that government about thirty years ago by the Persian prince of Kermanshah, and has never since been restored. It presents an irregular surface of hills and plains, much of it being capable of culture, but is at present, for

the most part, overrun by the Eeliaut tribes of Gouran and Sinjabee, and some other Kurdish and Arabian clans.

In the plain of Hurin in this pachalic, at the foot of a lofty summit called the Sartak, Major Rawlinson found the remains of a city, apparently of the most remote antiquity. The foundations, composed of huge masses of stone unhewn, and walls of most extraordinary thickness, are now all that can be seen; and that gentleman inclines to refer them to the Babylonian ages. Two fursucks south of Hurin, in a mountain gorge, the seat of a village named Sheikhan, there is a small tablet sculptured on the rock, exhibiting the same sort of device as is seen in the Babylonish cylinders; an armed figure stands upon a prostrate foe, while another kneels with hands fastened behind, as if praying for mercy; an upright quiver of arrows is placed by the victor king; and the tablet is closed by a cuneiform inscription, written in that complicated character which is nowhere seen except on bricks and cylinders. The tablet is only five feet long by two broad, and rather rudely executed.

A remarkable mountain, projecting from the lofty range of Dalahu, rises to the height of 2000 feet, so close behind the town of Zohab as quite to overhang it. This in ancient times was converted into a fortress which might be deemed impregnable. On three sides the hill ascends with a very abrupt slope from the plain to within 500 feet of the summit, the rest being a perpendicular scarp, which has been farther strengthened by building. On the fourth side, where it is united to the larger mountain, a wall, which, to judge by the part now remaining, must have been fifty feet high by twenty thick, and flanked at regular intervals by bastions, together with a ditch of most formidable dimensions, has been drawn across from scarp to scarp, a distance of above two miles, thus enclosing a space of ten square miles. At the northeast angle the scarp rises in a rocky ridge to join the Dalahu range; and the pass here, which conducts to the fort, is farther strengthened by a wall and two formidable castles. This is the stronghold of Holwan or Hulwan, where Yezdegerd, the last of the Sassanians, retreated after the capture of Ctesiphon by the Arabs, and it is called Banyardeh or Kalah Yezdegerd. Near the little village of Zardeh there are the remains of two palaces, the Harem and the Diwan Khaneh of the

same sovereign, both resembling in material and architecture the Sassanian buildings at Kasr Shireen and Haoosh Kerek.

Zohab has by some been regarded as the representative of Hulwan, the ancient Calah and the Halah of the Israelitish captivity. But Major Rawlinson denies the correctness of this conjecture, and attributes that honour to the town of Sir e Pool e Zohab, which is eight miles south of the present Zohab, and situated at a point where the river bursts through the rocks which bound on the southwest the valley of Bishiwah. This, he asserts, is the Chala of Isidore of Charax, which gave its name to the district Chalonitis. On the authority of Assemanni,* it was called indifferently Calah, Halah, and Hulwan by the Syrians, who established a metropolitan see at this place in the third century, while to the Arabs and Persians it was known by the last of those titles. But we must refer to Major Rawlinson† himself for the proofs on which he founds his conclusions, and pass on to a short notice of the antiquities found there. In the gorge through which the Hulwan forces its current, there are several sculptured tablets of Sassanian origin; but over one of these, on the rocks to the left, there is a bold and well-executed bas-relief of the Kayanian times—that is, of the age of Persepolis and Bessittom. A mile and a half from the gorge is seen a line of broken mounds, resembling those at Nineveh and Babylon, and therefore probably belonging to the Chaldean ages, as well as a vast assemblage of such eminences, which appear to mark the sites of the principal edifices of the ancient city. One of these is upward of fifty feet in height; and in several places brickwork, of the peculiar Babylonian character, is exposed to view. But the most remarkable monument is a royal sepulchre at the corner of the upper gorge, two miles distant from the sculptures, and precisely resembling in character the tombs of Persepolis. At the top of an artificial scarp, seventy feet in height, has been excavated a quadrangular recess, six feet deep, eight high, and thirty wide. In the centre of it is the opening into the tomb, the interior of which is rude, containing on the left hand the place for depositing the dead, with niches

* Bibliotheca Orientalis, vol. iii., p. 346; vol. iv., p. 753.

† Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. ix., part i., p. 35, London, 1839.

for lights, as usual, but no carving nor ornament of any sort. At the entrance are two broken pillars, which have been formed out of the solid rock, one on either side; the base and a small piece of either shaft appear below; and the capitals still adhere to the roof. On the smooth face of the scarped rock is an unfinished tablet, representing the figure of a *Mobid*, or high-priest of the Magi, clothed in his pontifical robes, wearing the square-pointed cap, and lappets over his mouth, which is the most ancient dress of the period of Zoroaster. This tomb is called Dookani Daood, or David's Shop; the Jewish monarch being supposed by the Ali Ullahis, and, indeed, by other Orientals, to have followed the calling of a smith or armourer. There are several other Sassanian ruins and spots consecrated by local tradition near this place, and many objects in the neighbourhood interesting to the comparative geographer and antiquary. At Deira, Gilan, and Zarna, along the foot of the Zagros range, Major Rawlinson discovered vestiges either of Babylonian or Sassanian cities; but to describe these would prove inconsistent with our limits. Of the rest of the country at the base of the hills, all the way to the borders of Khuzistan, little can be said in addition to what we have already observed, namely, that it is swampy and uncultivated, and occupied either by the Lour tribes of Pushtikoh, or by the Beni Lam Arabs.

CHAPTER XIII.

Modern Babylonia.

Bagdad.—Its Origin, Position, and History.—Walls—Gates—Mosques and Shrines.—Impressions on entering the City from Persia.—Banks of the Tigris.—Boats.—Bazars.—Market-places.—Sketch by Buckingham.—Private Houses.—Domestic Habits.—Women.—Georgians and Arabs.—Population.—Establishment of Daood Pacha.—Plague in Bagdad.—Its rapid Progress.—Exposure of Infants.—Inundation.—Condition of the Pacha.—Instances of sweeping Mortality.—Fate of Caravans and Fugitives.—Subsequent Calamities.—Present Population.—Costume.—White Asses and black Slaves.—A Battle within the Walls.—Insubordination at Kerbelah and Nejeff Ali.—Sketch of a March in Babylonia.—Camp of the Zobeid Sheik.—His Tent—And Entertainment.—Expenditure of an Arab Chief.—March towards Sook el Shiook.—Arab Bravado.—Hospitality.—Madan Arabs.—Their Houses—And Flocks of Buffaloes.—The Montefic Arabs.—Their Reed Huts.—Sook el Shiook.—Interview with the Sheik of the Montefic.

We must now take a glance at Modern Babylonia; and the first object in it which attracts attention is Bagdad, the City of the Caliphs, and the present capital of the pachalic. The Persians, as we learn from D'Herbelot,* claim for their Mahabadian kings the honour of founding this city, and attribute it to Zohauk; an obvious confusion of their own traditions with the Scriptural account, which assigns Babylon to Nimrod. They add that it was enlarged by Afrasiab, who called it Bagdad, or the Garden of Dad—the idol whom he worshipped. But there is little doubt that, in point of fact, the true founder was Almansor, second caliph of the Abbassides. That prince, disgusted with his former abode at Hashemiah, near Cufa, began, A.D. 760, to build the metropolis in question; but it was not finished until four years afterward, when he bestowed on it the name of Dar ul Salam, the Dwelling of Peace.

It appears to have been erected on the left bank of the river,† of a circular shape, enclosed by two walls, which were flanked by towers; and in the centre there was a

* Bibliothèque Orientale. See the word Bagdad.

† Kinneir says the western side, in which he differs from D'Herbelot Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire, London, 1813, p. 246.

View of Bagdad.

castle which commanded the neighbouring country. It would farther appear that the same Almansor, desirous to avoid as much as possible all contact with the rabble of his new capital, built on the western side of the Tigris a suburb named Karkh, joined to the eastern part by a bridge, and in which were the bazars and public markets. This city rose to its highest pitch of grandeur during the reigns of the celebrated Haroun al Raschid and his immediate successors; but, in the fourth century of the Hejira, the power of the caliphs having declined, we find Bagdad taken from them, first by Ali Buiyah, the second of the Dilemee dynasty, in A.D. 945, and afterward by Togrul Beg, the first of the Seljuk sovereigns. But these were comparatively slight calamities; for, though the glory of the house of Abbas had departed, their capital remained rich and populous until the Mogul invasion, under Zinghis Khan, swept like a deluge over Asia, and overwhelmed the prosperity of every town on its fair plains in a torrent of human blood. In A.D. 1253, the stern Hoolaku, grandson of Zinghis, marched against the devoted city, which was defended by Mostasem, when, not only was it taken, and the caliph and his two sons put to death, but the inhabitants also were subjected to a general massacre, which by some historians has been swelled to an incredible amount.*

The ruined city remained in the hands of the Moguls until A.D. 1392, when it was taken from Sultan Ahmed Ben Avis, of the race of Hoolaku, by the great Tamerlane. The former prince, however, having succeeded in repossessing himself of the capital, it was again attacked and reduced by the enraged Timur, who punished the inhabitants by putting the most of them to the sword. In the contest between the Turkomans of the White and Black Sheep, which distracted the Persian empire during the ninth century of the Hejira, it passed more than once from hand to hand until A.D. 1508, when Shah Ismael, of the Suffaveans, made himself master of it. During upward of a hundred years it continued to be an object of contention between the Turks and Persians, till at length, in A.D. 1637, it was finally taken by Amurath IV., who

* Some say 17,000,000; others are contented with 800,000: either amount implies exaggeration.

annexed it to the Ottoman empire, and in the possession of that power it has ever since remained.

In the course of these revolutions, the position, shape, and extent of Bagdad were so greatly changed, that it is scarcely possible to point out the original site. The palace of the celebrated Haroun is supposed to have stood on the western side of the Tigris; but from the fact that the Turks under Tamerlane swam the river from its eastern shore to reach the city, we are led to presume that the chief portion of it was then to be found on the opposite bank.

Such, however, has not been the case in more recent times. The present city is still intersected by the Tigris, though by far the larger and most important part is that which occupies its left, or northeastern side; the shape being nearly that of an oblong square, and the circuit about five miles. It is surrounded by a high wall built of bricks and mud, and flanked with towers of different ages, some of which owe their origin to the successive caliphs. There are six gates and entrances, three on each side of the river; seventeen large and 100 small towers on the eastern bank, and thirteen on the other. On several of these are cannon mounted, but chiefly unserviceable; and, besides several large breaches in the wall, occasioned by the effects of the inundation of 1831, it is altogether in bad repair. Outside there is a dry ditch, but which cannot be considered available as a defence.*

Besides the six gates of entrance towards the land, there is one on each side opening to the river, and one also which is called the Gate of the Talisman, the handsomest of all, originally built by Caliph al Naser. It was by this approach that Amurath entered when he took the city, but it was built up, and has remained closed ever since. Within the walls there are said to be 200 mosques, six colleges, and twenty-four baths. Of the first, many of which are attached to the shrines of saints, those of Sheik Abdul Kader, Sheik Shehab-u-deen, Sheik aboo Yacoob Mohammed, Sheik Maroof Kerkhee Habeebi-ajamee, Biskir e Haafee, Hooksam ibn Mansoor, Sheik Junaeed e Bagdadee, are the most important. The cathedral mosque of the caliphs, Jamah el Sook el Gazel, has been destroyed,

* Kinneir's Memoir, p. 248, 249

with the exception of a curious but rather clumsy minaret. The Jamah el Merjameeah, though chiefly modern, has some remains of rich old arabesque work, and its gate is fine. The Jamah el Vizier, on the bank of the Tigris, near the bridge, has a grand dome and lofty tower, and the great mosque in the square of El Maidan is still an imposing building. But, on the whole, there are few structures deserving of notice; and it may be remarked as singular in so celebrated a capital, that not above twenty-four minarets and about a dozen domes, none of them remarkable for beauty or great size, are to be counted within the precincts of the western division. The college of Caliph Mostanser is now the custom-house. The palace of the pacha, on the river-bank, at the northwest end of the western division, never magnificent, is now in utter ruins; and his highness lives in the citadel, which, though containing the arsenal, the mint, and public offices, is hardly in better order. Beyond the walls and near the Hillah gate is seen a singular hexagonal edifice, with a still more strangely formed tower, which covers the tomb of the beautiful Zobeide; and there is another ancient structure, said to have been erected by the celebrated Alp Arslan, one of the bravest of the Seljuk monarchs. It is constructed like a kibleh, and is supported on four pillars; on one side is fixed a black stone, around which are Cufic inscriptions nearly illegible.

Such are nearly all the buildings or objects that arrest the attention of a stranger in modern Bagdad; but the following sketch of first impressions as made upon the author when entering the town, may possibly be useful in conveying to his readers some idea of the place.

To those who come from Persia, especially when they have been sickened with a succession of ruins and other tokens of desolation such as had met our eyes, the first sight of Bagdad is certainly calculated to make a favourable impression, which does not immediately wear off. The walls in the first place present a more imposing aspect, constructed as they are of furnace-baked bricks, strengthened with round towers, and pierced for guns at each angle, instead of the mean-looking, crumbling enclosures which surround the cities of Iran. Upon entering the town, the traveller is moreover gratified by the appearance of the houses, which, like the walls, are all built of

good bricks, and rise to the height of several stories; and though the number of windows they present to the street is far from great, yet the eye is not constantly offended by the succession of irregular, mud-built structures, divided by dirty openings, undeserving even of the name of alleys, that make up the aggregate of a Persian city.

In riding along them, particularly in dry weather, one is impressed with the idea that the substantial walls to the right and left must contain comfortable dwellings, while the iron-clinched doors with which the entrances are defended, add to this notion of security.

Nor are the streets of Bagdad by any means totally unenlivened by apertures for admitting light and air. On the contrary, not only are windows to the street frequent, but there is a sort of projecting one, much in use, which overhangs the path, and generally belongs to some chamber, in which may be seen seated a few grave Turks smoking away the time; or, if you be in luck, you may chance to find yourself illumined by a beam from some bright pair of eyes shining through the half-closed lattice. These sitting-rooms are sometimes thrown across the street, connecting the houses on either side, and affording a pleasing variety to the architecture, particularly when seen, as they often are, half concealed by the leaves of a date-tree that overshadows them from the court within. There was something in the general air, the style of building, the foreign costume, the mingling of foliage, particularly the palm leaves, with architectural ornaments, when seen through the vista of some of the straighter streets, which excited in the mind of the author a confused remembrance of other and better-known lands. Such were the impressions received from what he saw in passing through the town; and the banks of the river exhibited a still more striking and attractive scene. The flow of a noble stream is at all times an interesting object; but when its margin is occupied by a long range of imposing, if not absolutely handsome buildings, shaded by palm groves, and enlivened by hundreds of boats and the hum of thousands of busy labourers, and its current spanned by a bridge of boats, across which there is a constant transit of men, horses, camels, and caravans, the combination forms a picture that can hardly fail to produce a very agreeable emotion. And such, undoubtedly, is the view of the Tigris from

many points on its banks, which command the whole reach occupied by the present city.

The first sight of the river did not certainly fulfil the author's expectations, for he had imagined a broader channel. With the appearance of the town from thence he was agreeably surprised; few blank walls are seen, as most houses have numerous lattices and projecting windows overlooking the stream; and there is a handsome mosque, with its domes and minarets close to the bridge—itself a pleasing object—with a certain irregularity and loftiness in the line of buildings on the left bank, which impart a pleasing variety to the view. The right or western bank is by no means so picturesque in point of architecture, but its large groves of date-trees, mingled with houses, render it also a pleasing object from the more populous side.

Among the objects that add interest to the water scenery of Bagdad are the various sorts of boats which are seen swarming on the Tigris. Those which trade between that city and Bussora are vessels of many tons burden, with high, square sterns, the after-part being covered with a deck, so as to form a cabin for the accommodation of passengers. The bow is low, but rises above the water somewhat in the form of those Arab *dows* which are observed in the Persian Gulf. They have but one mast, which rakes forward, and on which is hoisted a long yard bearing a large square sail. They also have a bowsprit, on which a jib is set.

The *dawk*, which is used chiefly for carrying firewood, is built in the form of a crescent, the horn forming the bow being the most curved. The breadth exceeds a third of the length; and the sides, which are flat, fall at an acute angle to join a keel or floor of two feet broad. The frame is made of various sorts of light timber and narrow plank, rudely joined together with slight iron fastenings, and the whole is thickly coated with bitumen. The rudder is made of spars formed like a large X; the tiller a crooked spar, being fixed along the top, while the end is applied obliquely to the horn of the stern. A tall, thin mast, bending forward, and secured by a single shroud aft and amidships, supports a light yard and a triangular sail.

The *farradeh* is a long, flat-bottomed wherry, made of planks, sewed or nailed together like the one just mention-

ed, coated also with bitumen, and moved by poles or paddles. Some are so large as to hold thirty armed men.

The *gooffah* is a round, basket-shaped vessel, from six to ten feet in diameter, formed of branches of the date, pomegranate, or osier tree steeped in water, closely wattled or bound together with leaves, and thickly coated with bitumen. It is moved by a paddle, and with greater speed than could be expected.

The other Assyrian raft, called the *kelleck*, is formed of a collection of spars tied together, and placed upon a layer of inflated skins. It is steered with a large oar, but can only float down stream. Most of these specimens of naval architecture are precisely the same as they are described to have been by the writers of antiquity. There are, besides, a variety of canoes and small boats used in the rivers and canals all over the country.

In the bazars of Bagdad there is just cause for disappointment. It is not, however, want of extent, for they are often very crowded; but there is in their construction a poverty of design and meanness of execution, with an appearance of dilapidation, which, though doubtless attributable in part to recent misfortune, arise chiefly from original defect. Some, and among these a very extensive range, the work of the late Daood Pacha, are well built of fire-brick and mortar, with lofty arcaded roofs, but others are very ruinous, and have coverings rudely formed with beams of wood, on which are spread thatch of date-tree branches or reeds. The shops themselves are poor, and frequently in disrepair; many are unoccupied, and in most places there may be traced that air of neglect and of reckless squalidity which so strongly indicates the advance of complete decay.

In various parts of the town there are open spaces, which, from particular descriptions of goods being sold, have thence received their names, as the "thread-market," the "muslin-market," or the "corn-market." Of these, the largest and the gayest is one close to the northwest, or Mosul gate; but none of them has any pretensions to splendour, or even to cleanliness. The last mentioned is, in fact, the great *place* of the city. Horses are here exposed for sale; it is surrounded by coffee-houses, which are constantly filled with an assemblage of all sorts of people, smoking and drinking. It is also the general place for

exhibition, and even of execution, for here criminals are punished with decapitation, hanging, or mutilation; and sometimes passengers are greeted with the sight of a headless trunk, exposed for the day as a warning to evil-doers. The grave Turk, however, insensible to the horror of the sight, smokes his pipe quietly, or passes by with indifference, simply muttering "Allah il ullah." This place of many uses contains little more than an acre of ground.

The following sketch, given by Buckingham, is so true and lively, as far as it goes, that we are tempted to insert it.* "The interior of the town offers fewer objects of interest than one would expect from its celebrity as an Oriental emporium of wealth and magnificence. A large portion of the ground included within the walls is unoccupied by buildings, particularly on the northeastern side; and even where edifices abound, particularly in the more populous quarter of the city, near the river, a profusion of trees are seen; so that, on viewing the whole from the terrace of any of the houses within the walls, it appears like a city arising from amid a grove of palms; or like what Babylon is supposed to have been, a walled province rather than a single town.

"All the buildings, both public and private, are constructed of furnace-burned bricks of a yellowish-red colour, a small size, and with such rounded angies as prove most of them to have been used repeatedly before; being taken, perhaps, from the ruins of one edifice to construct a second, and again from the fallen fragments of that to compose a third. In the few instances where the bricks are new, they have an appearance of cleanliness and neatness never presented by the old. The streets of Bagdad, as in all other Eastern towns, are narrow and unpaved, and their sides present generally two blank walls, windows being rarely seen opening on the public thoroughfare, while the doors of entrance leading to the dwellings from thence are small and mean. These streets are more intricate and winding than in many of the great towns of Turkey; and, with the exception of some tolerably regular lines of bazars and a few open squares, the interior of Bagdad is a labyrinth of alleys and passages.†

* Travels in Mesopotamia, vol. ii., p. 179–181, 191–193, 494–499

† It is to be remembered that this traveller came from Egypt and Turkey, while our author had travelled from Persia; their impressions were

"Of the private houses of Bagdad I saw but little, excepting only their exterior walls and terraces. It struck me as singular, that throughout the whole of this large city I had not seen even one pointed arch in the door of entrance to any private dwelling. They were all either round or flat, having a fancy-work of small bricks above them; and even in those parts of the old bazars and ruined mosques in which the pointed arch is seen, its form is nearer to the Gothic than to the common Saracenic shape, which I had also observed to be the case at Mosul; so that Bagdad could not have been the original seat of Saracenic architecture, which probably took its rise much farther in the West.

"The houses consist of ranges of apartments opening into a square interior court; and while subterranean rooms, called serdaubs, are occupeid during the day for the sake of shelter from the intense heat, the open terraces are used for the evening meal and for sleeping on at night. From the terrace of Mr. Rich's residence, which was divided into many compartments, each having its separate passage of ascent and descent, and forming, indeed, so many unroofed chambers, we could command at the first opening of the morning just such a view of Bagdad as is given in the 'Diable Boiteux' of Madrid, showing us all the families of Bagdad, with their sleeping-apartments unroofed, and those near our own abode often in sufficiently interesting situations. From this lofty station, at least eight or ten bedrooms in different quarters were exposed around us, where, as the families slept in the open air, domestic scenes were exposed to view without our being once perceived, or even suspected to be witnesses of them.

"Among the more wealthy, the husband slept on a raised bedstead, with a mattress and cushions of silk, covered by a thick, stuffed quilt of cotton, the bed being without curtains or moscheto-net. The wife slept on a similar bed, but always on the ground, that is, without a bedstead, and at a respectful distance from her husband; while the children, sometimes to the number of three or four, occupied only one mattress, and the slaves or servants each a

therefore different, which will account for apparent discrepancies in their respective accounts.

separate mat on the earth, but all lying down and rising up within sight of each other. Every one rose at an early hour, so that no one continued in bed after the sun was up; and each, on rising, folded up his own bed, his coverlid and pillows, to be taken into the house below, excepting only the children, for whom this office was performed by the slave or the mother.

"None of all these persons were as much undressed as Europeans generally are when in bed. The men retained their shirt, drawers, and often their caftan, a kind of inner cloak. The children and servants lay down with nearly the same quantity of clothes as they had worn in the day; and the mothers and their grown daughters wore the full silken trousers of the Turks, with an open gown, and, if rich, their turbans, or, if poor, an ample red chemise, and a simpler covering for the head. In most of the instances which we saw, the wives assisted with all due respect and humility to dress and undress their husbands, and to perform all the duties of valets. After dressing, the husband generally performed his devotions, while the slave was preparing a pipe and coffee; and on his seating himself on his carpet when this was done, his wife served him with her own hands, retiring at a proper distance to wait for the cup, and always standing before him, sometimes, indeed, with the hands crossed in an attitude of great humility, and even kissing his hand on receiving the cup from it, as is done by the lowest attendants of the household.

"While the husband lounged on his cushions, or sat on his carpet in an attitude of ease and indolence to enjoy his morning pipe, the women of the family generally prayed. In the greater number of instances they did so separately, and exactly after the manner of the men; but on one or two occasions, the mistress and some other females, perhaps a sister or a relative, prayed together, following each other's motions side by side, as is done when a party of men are headed in their devotions by an imam. None of the females, whether wife, servant, or slave, omitted this morning duty; but among the children under twelve or fourteen years of age, I did not observe any instance of their joining in it.

"Notwithstanding the apparent seclusion in which women live here, as they do, indeed, throughout all the Turkish

empire, there is no want of real liberty, which sometimes, as in other places, is sufficiently abused. Nor can it be denied that the facility of clandestine meetings between persons of the country is much greater in Turkish cities than in any European metropolis. The disguise of a Turkish or Arab female in her walking-dress is so complete, that her husband himself could not recognise her beneath it; and, consequently, let a lady go where she will, no suspicion of the truth can attach to an individual.

"Among the women of Bagdad, the Georgians and Circassians are decidedly the handsomest by nature and the least disfigured by art The high-born natives of the place are of less beautiful forms and features, and of less fresh and clear complexions; while the middling and inferior orders, having brown skins, and nothing agreeable in their countenances except a dark and expressive eye, are sometimes so barbarously tattooed as to have the most forbidding appearance. With all ranks and classes the hair is stained a red colour by henna; and the palms of the hands are so deeply dyed with it as to resemble the hands of a sailor when covered with tar. Those only who, by blood or habits of long intercourse, are allied to the Arab race, use the blue stains so common among the Bedouins of the Desert. The passion for this method of adorning the body is carried in some instances as far as it could have been among the ancient Britons; for, besides the staining of the lips with that deadly hue, anklets are marked around the legs, with lines extending upward from the ankle at equal distances to the calf of the legs; a wreath of blue flowers is made to encircle each breast, with a chain of the same pattern hanging perpendicularly between them; and among some of the most determined belles, a zone or girdle of the same singular composition is made to encircle the smallest part of the waist, imprinted on the skin in such a manner as to be forever after indelible. There are artists in Bagdad whose profession it is to decorate the ladies with wreaths, and other articles of the newest fashion."

The population of Bagdad in the year 1826 was, by the author just cited, estimated at 80,000 souls. A short time afterward it must have amounted to 150,000 at least, for the Pacha Daood, besides maintaining about 7000 cavalry, and from 5000 to 6000 infantry, with field and camel

artillery, kept a brilliant court and encouraged commerce, so that the city, if not the pachalic, flourished under his government. But since his days, pestilence, inundation, and famine have greatly reduced the population of the town as well as of the country.

It was in the spring of 1831 that the plague, brought, as is believed, from Persia by the pilgrims to Kerbelah, broke out in Bagdad; and a more frightful detail of horrors than this visitation gave birth to, is not, perhaps, to be found in the history of human sufferings. The pacha, desirous to prevent undue alarm, by a mistaken caution prevented the egress of those who would have fled, so that the disease had not only full scope, but was even aggravated by a dense crowd of every sort and condition. On the 10th of April the deaths had already amounted to 7000; and from 1000 to 1200 were every day added to the number. In no long time this daily mortality increased to 4000 and 5000. Many houses were emptied; profound silence prevailed; no one was to be met in the streets except water-carriers employed to wash the dead, or those who bore them to the tomb. But soon the victims became too numerous for the attention of the living. Water could not be had for the use of the survivers, nor cloth to wrap the bodies of the dead, nor persons to inter them. Hence some of the most considerable people were carried on asses, and thrown into the river or into some hole; while the poor were buried imperfectly in the houses where they died, or were left to taint the air on the spots where they happened to expire.

The most distressing thing, perhaps, was the abandonment of young children, who were exposed in the streets by the dying parents, in the hope of attracting the regard of charitable persons, at a period, alas! when the dreadful circumstances of the time had deadened all feelings of sympathy. Yet the sight did occasionally move the pity of women—mothers, perhaps, themselves—who, most commonly, to their humane assistance added the sacrifice of their lives. Mr. Groves, the missionary who relates these facts, saw often, in the walks which he took to the British residency, as many as eight or ten of those helpless little creatures thus exposed, some of them not ten days old, which, though heartsick at the sight, he had no means of saving.

When the mortality was at the highest, the misery of the wretched inhabitants was increased by another terrible agent. The waters of the river, which had risen beyond all precedent, surrounded the town as with a sea. The wall at length gave way, and the flood poured in, sapping the mud-built foundations of the houses, of which 7000 fell in the night, burying in their ruins the sick, the dying, and the dead. Fifteen thousand individuals are estimated thus to have perished on the eastern side alone; yet so absorbed was every one with his own grief, that this event, which in common times would have caused the greatest excitement, was scarcely noticed by any. The ground towards the river being higher, a number of houses remained untouched. To these all who had escaped the effects of the inundation repaired, filling up the blanks that had been made by death, and bringing fresh food for the pestilence which lurked in the empty dwellings, whose late tenants still lay unburied within their walls.

Nor was the condition of the pacha better than that of his subjects. His palace was in ruins; his guards were dead or had fled; out of 100 Georgians who constituted his personal attendants, four only were left; of his women, two alone remained; and he at length was indebted to the benevolence of a poor fisherman for a little food to preserve him from starvation. He sought to flee the city, and desired the use of the residency boat; but of her crew only one man was alive, and he could not find others to work her. "Fear of him," says Mr. Grove, "is passed, and love for him there is none."

Such havoc could endure but for a season. The pestilence at length mitigated its severity, and by the 26th of May the disease was at an end. Lamentable and fearful was the wreck on which the survivers had to gaze. Of the gross population of Bagdad, there is every reason to believe that two thirds were carried off, and that the number of dead did not fall short of 100,000.

The instances of mortality in families and among certain classes of men were yet more striking. Of eighteen servants and sepoys left in the British residency, two only escaped; and one of them was the sole surviver of a family of fourteen. An Armenian of rank assured Mr. Groves, that out of 130 houses in his quarter, only twenty-seven of the inhabitants were left. One of the moollahs decla-

red, that in the section of the city where he had lived, he knew not one remaining; and, as a single instance of its effects in other parts, it may be mentioned, that the town of Hillah, which contained 10,000 inhabitants, was entirely depopulated. Some, no doubt, had fled; but the greater number fell victims to the disease.

Nor was it confined to cities and villages. A large caravan, which had left Bagdad for Damascus at the commencement of the mortality, was at once seized with the epidemic and surprised by the inundation. Having reached a comparatively elevated spot, they remained confined to it during three weeks, the water constantly gaining on them, and the plague thinning their ranks. Few had the good fortune to leave the place.

But there were thousands who fled too late, and were caught without any sufficient vantage-ground within reach; so that they were forced to remain in the water, which rose half a yard high in their tents. Without food or the means of making a fire, neither sick nor whole could lie down; and, what was still more deplorable, they were not able to bury their fast-accumulating dead. Some, frantic with despair, sought to flee, and were drowned in attempting to return, though it were only that they might expire at home; and the few who did escape fell into the hands of the predatory Arabs, who treated them with their wonted barbarity.

Next came famine, which carried off a portion of those whom pestilence had spared. But the ruin of the surrounding villages, and the effects of rapacity and war, driving the inhabitants of the country to the town, it thereby acquired a certain measure of population, which, however, in the course of the three succeeding years, was again thinned by the same frightful disease. Under these calamities the power of Daood Pacha was crushed; and Ali Pacha, the present ruler, who had been appointed by the Porte to supersede him, was enabled to obtain possession of the city, together with the person of his rival.

Still, though peace has nominally been restored, and plague has ceased, the population of Bagdad is far from having reached its former extent. A few years ago its amount was estimated at about 60,000, of whom the greater number were Turks and Arabs; but many were also true Bagdadees, a somewhat peculiar race, deriving a

mixture of blood from all the neighbouring countries. Most of the merchants are of Arab descent, though mingled with Armenians, Christians of the Catholic and Syrian churches, and Jews; the bazars being crowded also with Kurds, Persians, and Bedouins. But the last-mentioned race do not like to pass the night in the town; and the greater number of Persians, being pilgrims to the shrines of Kerbelah and Nejeff Ali, generally take up their quarters at the village of Kazemeen, or outside of the walls towards the northwest.

The costume of Bagdad is described by Mr. Buckingham as being in his day less splendid than that of Constantinople or of Egypt. In the time of Assad Pacha this may have been the case, but in that of Daood it was certainly very rich; and the court of the latter, with his magnificently-mounted Georgians, his officers and their trains, made a very gallant show. It is otherwise now; for the plainness of the modern Turkish dress has extended to this city, and the establishment of Ali is somewhat mean and insignificant.

Still in the bazars there is a good deal of glitter and attraction; and a stranger is particularly struck with the singularly wild attire of the Arabs and the brilliant costume of the Kurds. The former bind a silk kerchief, in large bars of yellow and red, round the head with a rope of camel's hair, and wear the national abba floating loosely from the shoulders, often with very little under it. The latter appear in rich turbans of red, white, and blue striped silk, with long fringes hanging down their shoulders; gay vests and robes, over which is thrown the abba of white, brown, or striped camlet. Among other striking objects in the streets of Bagdad are the multitude of milk-white asses and jet-black negroes. The former are used by all but the warrior class in preference to horses, and particularly by the ladies, who may be seen in large parties trotting on their donkeys to pay visits; and such animals, particularly if possessed of fine paces, sell for a large sum. The African slaves are quite as much the fashion, both for male and female attendants, and, it appears, are especially prized for their deformity. They are all thick-lipped, have broad faces, high cheek-bones, exceedingly depressed noses, staring white eyes, and are brought chiefly from Zanguebar by the Imam of Muscat, who is a great dealer in those unhappy beings.

Another thing that arrests a stranger's attention is the excessive noisiness of all creatures in this large town. From the dawn of day, when the flocks and herds that rest at night within the walls are with great clamour driven forth to feed, till evening, when the Bedouins are heard shouting out to each other in stentorian voices as they leave the streets and bazars, all is uproar, noise, and confusion. The Jew and Armenian merchants, the camel and mule drivers, the boys, the women—nay, the very ladies upon their donkeys, all seem to vie with each other in loud vociferation.

At the time when the writer of these pages was in the city, this clamour was, if possible, augmented by the additional number of men and cattle which, from particular circumstances, had been driven under shelter of its walls. The Arab tribes in the neighbourhood, when they have any dispute with the pacha, are in the habit of marching in full force to Bagdad, sometimes investing it, and always consuming the corn and forage in the vicinity, in the hope of extorting whatever they may require; while he, generally too weak to oppose them, is wont to remain ensconced within till want of food compels them to retreat. At the time just alluded to, the Aneiza, a clan from the Syrian frontier, in consequence of a misunderstanding with the pacha, held the city in siege, as the Jerbah had done the previous year, and occasional skirmishes took place at some distance from it. During the same period there was a battle, attended by more than usual blooodshed, within the town itself, between another tribe of Arabs, the Ageil—who had conducted themselves contumaciously to the government—and the pacha's troops, whom he sent to dislodge them. The firing, which continued several hours, was attended with the sacrifice of many lives, and terminated in the expulsion of the intruders and the plunder of the western half of the city by its defenders. It cannot be a matter of surprise that Bagdad, while made the theatre of such transactions, should not flourish.

The same disposition to insubordination and riot prevails throughout the greater part of the pachalic, and in no place more strongly than in the two great cities of Sheah pilgrimage, Nejeff Ali and Kerbelah. The former contains the tomb of Ali, and is therefore an object of profound veneration to those who regard him as the true suc-

cessor of the Prophet. The other, in like manner, is hallowed in their eyes by possessing the remains of his son, the murdered Hassan, who fell on the banks of the Euphrates by the hands of Shummur and his followers. These two stations, enjoying the right of sanctuary, became the resort of so many profligate characters that all good government was at an end. To such an extent did these *Yerrimmases* (as this band of ruffians were called) carry their outrages, that the property of no man was secure; while, by means of a certain system of secret intelligence, they rallied in a moment at any given point, to resist every attempt at enforcing order or inflicting punishment.

Daood Pacha, after much trouble, succeeded in making himself master of Nejeff Ali, and turning out the Yerrimmases. But Kerbelah resisted his efforts, nor could his successor for a long time succeed in bringing the inhabitants to reason, even after their ranks had been thinned by plague and famine. It is now believed, however, that of late it has been reduced to a state of obedience.

A few sketches may serve to give some idea of the aspect of modern Babylonia and Chaldea, and of their inhabitants. It was in the month of January that the author left the site of ancient Babylon to cross the Jezirah. The morning showed the ground covered with hoarfrost, and as hard as iron; every wrapping that could be mustered was insufficient to keep out the cold, though in summer the heat is insupportable. The march was a long and tedious one, across a bare, joyless desert. The only break in the monotony of the scene was presented by the site of some ancient town or city, of which not less than four large ones, together with several canals, occurred within thirty-two miles. In fact, scarcely had we passed one when another appeared; and it might safely be said, that we did not ride over a square rood during the whole day without seeing traces of former habitations, in fragments of brick, glass, or pottery. A great part of the land was perfectly barren, while much of the surface was so cracked as to make riding very unsafe. Where vegetation did exist, it consisted only of a few bushes of capers, of the mimosa agrestis, and some salsuginous plants or grass: of this last we occasionally saw large tracts, which, from being periodically overflowed, had shot up into a fine growth.

About three in the afternoon we were greeted with the sight of a few camels on the verge of the horizon—generally a sure sign of approach to an Arab encampment; but this time it deceived us. These animals belonged to the Jerbah tribe, some of which had wandered thus far. We had seen smoke, too, which we believed to arise from the Zobeid camp; but hour after hour passed on, and it appeared no nearer. Towards evening we fell in with more camels, and next saw a flock of sheep; but still no habitation was perceived; and, after wandering till dark, we came to a small party of the natives just described, who had neither bread nor water, and scarcely a mouthful of corn for the horses. We all spent the night in anxiety and unrefreshed; the servants, besides enduring the pangs of hunger and thirst, being obliged to watch in turn against the thievish propensities of their hosts.

Next morning, though cold and comfortless, the visiters resumed their progress, and the River Tigris soon enabled them to quench the thirst of themselves and their horses. Their way then lay through a sedgy marsh, a large portion of which, having been set on fire, emitted the smoke that had caused their disappointment on the preceding day, and was then blazing in a line of flame which extended for miles. This conflagration was lighted up by the Arabs in order to bring up a fresh crop of grass in place of the rank herbage.

A few strings of camels appearing in the distance heralded the approach of the tribe, which was in motion, and the whole horizon was soon covered with these animals, looking like moving trees in the *mirage*. After a few hours more, the party were in the camp of the Zobeid sheik, where, however, their reception was niggardly enough, for scarcely could either fire, water, or victuals be procured. It was the Turkish Ramazan or fast; and it appeared as if they were resolved to enforce its observance on strangers as well as on themselves. The fare and treatment next morning were equally indifferent; and the ideas of Arab hospitality were waxing very low in the minds of the travellers, when, on the second evening, they were invited to an entertainment which produced a more favourable opinion.

The tent of the sheik, formed of dark-brown haircloth, was fifty or sixty feet long, supported in the centre by a

row of poles, none of them rising more than nine feet. The side to windward was pinned down with ropes to within three feet of the ground, producing a sharp pent, the opening being closed by a screen of the same material, which, though thin and pervious to the light, proved a tolerable protection against the wind. The other side was open in all its extent; the outer extremity, which should have been fastened down, being elevated by poles of about six feet in height, the ropes being proportionally relaxed. The space thus covered overhead might be from sixteen to twenty feet broad, by the length already stated. The tent contained neither goods nor furniture, save towards the upper end, where were some pillows and a few carpets arranged for seats, and where the chief received visiters in form. Near the lower end was a fireplace, marked only by the ashes of successive fires. At this time flared from it a bright blaze in the faces of as wild a set of savages as ever surrounded a cannibal's feast, and who, to the number of twenty or thirty, were seated on their heels, most of them with shirts and abbas tucked up to permit their long limbs to rejoice in the genial heat.

The chief and our friend the Kurd received us standing; but, so soon as a rag of carpet had been thrown down for our convenience at one point of the circle, we all took our seats. Never saw we anything so perfectly savage on so large a scale, for the Kurds are accomplished gentlemen in appearance compared to the Arabs. Even the Turkomans stood out in advantageous contrast with these wild children of the desert. A shirt and an abba were the general full dress, with a headkerchief that could boast of no particular colour. The sharp eye, too, gleamed with scintillating fierceness from among their long black elf-locks and beneath their contracted brows, so that a stranger, judging from the loud tones of voice in which they spoke, would have imagined they were just about to use the sword or large clubbed stick which every one held in his hand, or had laid beside him on the floor. But we had not long to dwell on the ever-varying features of this group; for the cawachee or coffee-preparer of the great man now stepped forward, and, first sitting down in the circle and warming his hands, began to pour out, from two ample brazen vessels, a sort of liquor composed of hot water and sugar, flavoured with ginger and spice, with

which it appears these Ramazan ascetics break their fast, and which is presented also to the guests in little cups not bigger than a dram-glass. Then came the signal for dinner, and we all went to the other end of the tent, where it was laid out.

In the centre of the space in front of the cushions, which were covered for the occasion with coarse canvass bags—by way of tablecloth, it is presumed—there was raised a sort of platform of wood, about six feet in diameter; and on this, in an immense copper dish, smoked a heap of rice, amounting to nearly three hundred weight. Encompassing this grand centre-piece were ranged smaller platters filled with sundry preparations of mutton and pastry. The former was boiled or stewed, and dressed up as forced meat, with plums, raisins, and other good things; the latter was in still more varied shapes, and, though rather greasy, all exceedingly good. Most of the dishes, indeed, were swimming in melted butter and rich sauces, and the whole exhibited a chief-like profusion. Around this banquet sat about thirty of the savages before described, with their long, black, disordered locks hanging over the dishes; and behind these stood or sat a still more extensive circle of expectants; for their practice is, that as soon as any one has satisfied his appetite, he gives place to another; and thus the succession proceeds, until the whole party, often amounting to hundreds, has been fed, should the viands suffice. It was amusing to witness the vigorous *set-to* that was made by one and all the moment the "Bismillah!" was uttered. In one second, every hand was plunged arm-deep into the rice; and each man vied with his neighbour in making huge balls of it with the grease and sauce of the stews, and in the dexterity with which he stuffed them into his mouth. The sheik, though he did not forget his own share in the feast, was by no means unmindful of his visiters. He took large lumps of the meat and pastry, and threw them down before us on the rice, pouring whole dishes of sauce and melted ghee over it to increase its savouriness. The drink provided to wash down these solid morsels was a sort of sherbet made of sugar and water, acidulated, and very agreeable; and it appeared to be quite as abundant as the eatables.

The guests then rose like the others, washed their hands, and retired to the withdrawing-room, that is, to the fire-

place at the other end, where the cawachee had resumed his seat, having before him a row of large coffee-pots, from which we were soon served with small cups of that beverage, the dose being repeated every ten minutes as long as we remained. This cook or butler was a miserable scarecrow, with a face like a reaping-hook, a ragged shirt and gown, and headgear of unspeakable squalidity; his coffee, which was excellent, was flavoured with cardamoms, was handed about by barelegged Ganymedes, in canvass shirts of pretty much the same colour as the beverage. Being the chief guests, we were served first, and afterward the whole party indiscriminately; the cawachee helping himself and his cup-bearers as regularly as the rest.

Entertainments like these, and the practice of a profuse hospitality, constitute the principal claim on the revenue of an Arab chief. His personal expenses, or those of his family, are trifling, compared with the outlay of a Persian or a Turkish noble; but an almost incredible amount of viands and provender is expended on numerous occasions. The daily consumption of the Zobeid patriarch, when alone, was not more than four sheep, and 250 or 300 lbs. of rice; but when he had company it varied from ten to twenty sheep, with rice in proportion. At the entertainments of Suffook of the Jerbah tribe, it was not uncommon to see the carcasses of twenty sheep lying boiled or roasted upon huge masses of rice, and this repeated three or four times a day.

The party, having sojourned two days with the sheik, took a direction down to Jezirah towards the country of the Montefic. The way for some time stretched over a flat desert, sprinkled with the small mimosa agrestis, caper bush, camel's thorn, and some salsuginous plants. These were seen in smaller numbers towards the marshy land near the River Hye, which is annually overflowed, and where a few tamarisks are almost the only vegetation that appears. In approaching the Lemlum marshes, and the borders of the Euphrates near Grayim, the party had to make their way through reeds or sedgy grass, which serves as pasture to numerous herds of buffaloes kept by the Madan Arabs who frequent these tracts. The whole country, whether dry or boggy, presents a monotonous and forbidding aspect, void of all the cheerful tokens of

man's presence, unless when the eye is greeted by the occasional sight of the black Bedouin tent, the reed hut of the Madan Arab, or of the animals which, from constituting the chief property of the children of the wilderness, usually indicate their neighbourhood.

On the first day of this march the travellers witnessed an amusing specimen of bullying. In the morning they were alarmed by observing a party of twelve or fourteen men, on camels, make their appearance in an opposite direction; for, as every one met with in these deserts is held to be an enemy until the contrary is proved, there was some reason for apprehending an unpleasant rencounter. As it was important to learn who the strangers were, a horseman was instantly despatched towards them; but, as this demonstration appeared rather to produce an acceleration of their pace from us than any hostile movement towards our front, certain individuals who had accompanied us on foot, and who had given evident symptoms of alarm, began to recover their valour, swearing that the persons in question were no better than sand under their feet, and that they would drive them like dust before the wind.

When our messenger rejoined us, and all this unnecessary courage had apparently been expended in a flash of heroism, we were surprised by observing the guide, who had remained with us, fall into a desperate state of agitation. He flung his abba and headkerchief upon the ground, stamped about with wild grimaces, and tucked up the long sleeves of his shirt to his shoulders, uttering all the time strange inarticulate sounds. Something was obviously wrong; but so great was the ferment of his spirit, that it was not without some difficulty we could come at the truth. It appeared, at length, that the people in sight were of the Shummur, or, rather, of the Jerbah tribe, and were his enemies. They had robbed him and murdered his people; so he swore he would go after them, and put every one of them to death. Thus he went on, girding up his loins, examining his matchlocks and pouches of ammunition, from which he selected a parcel of bullets, and tossed them into his mouth to be ready for prompt service, and all the while he uttered most awful threats, to which his comrade responded, though with somewhat less vehemence.

On putting the question to Seyed Hindee what all this

folly could mean, that worthy only shrugged up his shoulders, and treated the bravado with the contempt it deserved; but, as it was occasioning very inconvenient delay, we made the interpreter signify to the guides, that if this was to be their mode of performing their duty to us, we should return to the sheik and inform him. This, with a small show of displeasure, brought the man to his senses; he untucked his sleeves, resumed his abba, and began, looking very much like a fool, to excuse his antics by a detail of the causes of his enmity to those wicked Shummurs.

The fact was, he never had the slightest notion of meddling with them at all: it was merely a flourish, got up to impress us with an idea of his courage. Had the strangers indicated the smallest disposition to attack us, he would have been the first to betake himself to flight. This incident places the character of Arab courage in those parts in its true light.

A day or two later the party had a specimen of Arabian hospitality and kindness to strangers. Having bivouacked in the open plain without food or drink either for their horses or themselves, they proceeded next morning, hungry, thirsty, and weary, till the appearance of camels at a distance gave token of an encampment. The men ran away on the approach of our party, but a horseman was sent out to satisfy them of our pacific intentions. In the mean time, three or four more cavaliers, armed with spears, manœuvred on our right, who, after flourishing about for a while, came off at full gallop. Another of our Arabs dashed forth to meet them; down went the butt-ends of their spears to the ground; and, after a short converse, we had the satisfaction of seeing the leader and our hero lean forward and embrace each other from their saddles. All fear of assault was thus terminated, and our hopes of a kind reception were confirmed by the welcome which they gave us as they came forward to join our party. These expectations, however, proved fallacious. The horsemen, indeed, rode along with us towards some tents, which now appeared at a distance; but, finding between them and us a natural canal, partly filled with mud and water, they discouraged us from attempting to cross it by asserting that the occupiers of those tents were unable to entertain us, and offering to take us to a richer tribe a little farther

on. This, we discovered afterward, was but a stratagem to inveigle us away from their own homes—the very encampment we had seen—for one after another slunk off as we advanced, until we were left alone. In the mean time we observed the country beyond the creek studded with tents, while on our side not one was to be seen; so, perceiving that we had been cheated by those who first met us, we halted opposite the largest group, and resolved to send our guide across to negotiate for our reception. He had directions to assure them not only of our good intentions, but of an equal ability to remunerate our entertainers. To sell food, indeed, to the traveller is quite against the laws of Arabian hospitality, but an interchange of presents is admissible; so, after a considerable negotiation, arising more from mistrust than delicacy, the scruple of etiquette was got over. We passed the canal, and at length got barley for our horses, and a supply of hot bread and dates stewed in melted butter for ourselves.

The marsh which we had now reached was one appropriated entirely to pasture for buffaloes; animals that delight in mud and water, and immense herds of which are kept by a peculiar race of Arabs, well known along the banks of the rivers by the name of *Madan*. They are fixed, not migratory; they live upon the produce of their cattle, which, with a few sheep and cows, constitute their whole property; occupying huts formed of split reeds, in society with their animals, which they are said scarcely to exceed in intellectual endowments. It is from the notorious uncouthness and brutality of their habits that the other Arabs give them the name of Madan, a term compounded of two words signifying *not wise*. They also have the reputation of being the most inveterate thieves in the whole country; and probably they are not a whit behind their neighbours in the arts of petty larceny. But, wild and brutal as they are, we did not discover a great difference between them and the other tribes.

Though they received us sullenly at first, yet after a few words of explanation all went on smoothly enough. They did not profess to entertain us, and we did not consider ourselves their guests; but they gave us what we required at tolerably fair prices, and assisted us in getting water, wood, and other necessaries. Moreover, they pledged themselves for the safety of our cattle, keeping watch

over them; upon the understanding, no doubt, that this service should not be forgotten in the present they were to receive at our departure.

As for themselves, they and their domiciles were certainly curiosities. The latter were a sort of cage, made of reeds like split ratans; and the largest of them did not exceed ten feet long by eight broad. As for any division of chambers for men and women nothing of the kind appeared to have entered their thoughts. Each shed was surrounded by a little space enclosed by walls of brushwood, which served for defence as well as for fuel. It was curious to see the great droves of buffaloes returning home in the evening, each going straightway to its master's hut, without driving or constraint of any kind. The human animals that issued from these dens at our approach, bore certainly as much the appearance of the dregs of the human species as can well be imagined.

The travellers at length reached the country of the Montefic, of which tribe mention has already been more than once made in these pages. This powerful clan, after a variety of struggles with the Turkish authorities, in some of which they suffered very severely, acquired, about the year 1744, dominion and right of taxation over a small tract of country below Sook el Shiook, themselves at the same time paying a stated sum to the sultan's treasury. One of their sheiks, however, thought fit to throw off this slight burden, and was, in consequence, surprised, and the people almost entirely destroyed by Solyman, a Mameluke officer, surnamed "Aboo Leila," or the Father of Night, from the rapidity of his nocturnal attacks. The troubles of the pachalic, however, enabled the Montefic again to raise their heads; and they have since contrived to appropriate the whole district, from the mouth of the Shut el Arab to Semavah, besides occupying the tract between the Hye and Korna, and extending their pasture-range as far as Hit and Anah on the Euphrates. The possession of so much territory has created a disposition to improve the soil, and a considerable number of the tribe are now *fellahs* or cultivators. It is true that the prejudice against a fixed life is still strong, and only the lowest of the tribe will condescend to remain stationary; but the change is in progress. The sheiks, who have all their own portions of land, regard it as their chief means of

subsistence, though cultivated by a peasantry whom they despise.

One of the signs of this change were the curious villages of reed-built huts which they occupied upon the banks of the Euphrates, superseding the usual black hair tents of the Bedouins. These houses stood in groups, surrounded by enclosures of the same materials, and many of them were constructed with great taste. The mode of building is simple enough: clusters of reeds, from fifteen to twenty feet high, are neatly bound with withes or bands made of the same, and planted in the ground at proper distances, in two rows, like posts. The small ends are then bent till those of the opposite clusters in each row meet in the form of an arch, when they are fastened together by smaller bundles, laid longitudinally on the roof, and tied to each post. This framework is covered, both sides and roof, with mats made of the split reeds, and ornamented with neat lattice-work, according to the fancy and skill of the architect. One would imagine that such slight structures were ill calculated to resist storms of wind and rain; but they are found to do so very effectually, and certainly they are more comfortable than a tent. But it is a strange piece of affectation to prefer such flimsy fabrics to the more solid houses composed of clay, inhabited by the peasantry of villages, merely because they imply a slighter deviation from nomadic habits.

But, notwithstanding this aversion to stationary dwellings, the chief mart of the country, Sook el Shiook, that is, "the market-place of the sheiks," is a walled town, constructed of sun-baked bricks, and containing, before the plague, 600 or 700 families. Seen from a distance, imbosomed in date-tree groves, it has a neat and attractive appearance; but the illusion is dissipated on a nearer approach. It is almost entirely a mass of ruined houses, among which a few, still tenanted, contain the small number who escaped the pestilence; and it is of all human abodes the most filthy and abominable. It is almost impossible to walk the streets without contamination; and the smell of the butchers' shops renders all ingress impossible to civilized nostrils. The bazars are rather extensive, but thinly tenanted, and most of the shops are filled with articles suited to Arab wants alone.

Into this emporium the sheik never enters; and he makes it his boast that he will at no time degrade himself by advancing within its walls. The Arabs have an instinctive dislike to such enclosures. From their black tents they can issue forth when they please; but some of them have, to their cost, found the case otherwise with walls of brick or mud.

The first interview of the travellers is thus described. Our watches pointed nearly to eleven P.M., when the meerza, entering our tent, told us that the bustle of the salaam being over, the great man could receive us in a suitable manner, and accordingly we sallied forth. The sheik had a white tent, part of the present of investiture sent by Ali Pacha; but not in this did he receive his friends and the public, it being only his sleeping-place. His hall of audience was a temporary hut of reeds, constructed in about twenty minutes for his accommodation. It was, indeed, extremely rude. On the floor, round the sides, was spread a narrow slip of matting; across the upper end was laid, in like manner, a ragged strip of carpet. A dim, dirty linen lantern, which hung from one of the reed-posts, shed a most dismal light upon two dense rows of savages, seated with their backs to the matted walls, and barely rendered visible what seemed a huge bundle of clothes raised a little above the rest of the assembly, on a thing like an old hencoop. A fissure in the upper part of this indescribable apparel disclosed a nose and two glittering eyes, which indicated the august presence of the sheik.

He did not rise to welcome us, but bowed, and at the same time uttered certain sounds, which were understood to express satisfaction. With no small difficulty we made our way upward to his right hand, where we seated ourselves; after which, for some time, we all remained in silence. But his highness, happening to discover that one of his guests was a physician, immediately became animated. He began a most lively detail of his numerous ailments, and ended by asking whether the doctor would feel his pulse that night or the morrow. But he instantly replied to his own question, and a bony arm was thrust forth from the mass of coverings. It was not easy to tell whether the chuckling laugh with which he received the medical man's report, that "he could find nothing the

matter with his worship," was one of approval or of disappointment.

The state of his health having been amply discussed, he began to unlock the stores of his own wisdom and knowledge on other subjects. The affairs of Persia having been mentioned, and a remark made concerning the shah's death, he desired to be informed "who was the shah?" On being satisfied in this particular, and, moreover, being told that the said ruler had expired at Ispahan, the chief of all the Montefics repeated the word "Ispahan? Ispahan? what is it? where is it?—a country? a city? or what?" On this head, also, due intelligence was afforded him; and he then continued, in the most amiable and condescending manner possible, to gather knowledge and show forth his own ignorance, without betraying the smallest symptom of that affectation under which some are apt to cloak their deficiencies.

In the mean time, ginger tea and bitter coffee were handed round by a slave. The first was sweet, hotly spiced, and excellent; the latter, like all of Arab manufacture, was strong as brandy, and bitter as gall, but warm and refreshing. Midnight being close at hand, we thought proper to withdraw. With regard to the mode of proceeding on our journey, guides, and other matters, the sheik vouchsafed us scarcely one word. It was intimated to us, indeed, that he meant to remain there the next day, and would then make all the necessary arrangements for our comfort; but we learned in the morning that he had risen at an earlier hour than we, and carried off his nobility to Koote, a place farther up the river, leaving us to follow at our leisure.

CHAPTER XIV.

Religion, Character, Manners, and Customs of the Inhabitants of Modern Mesopotamia and Assyria.

Variety of Races.—Arabs.—Countries inhabited by.—Religion.—Character.—Blood-feuds — Sketches of the Arabs on the Euphrates by Elliot.—Beni Saeed.—Hamet ul Khaleel —Their Women.—Costume.—Camp of the Al Fadhlee.—Food.—Jungle Arabs.—Mode of decamping and encamping.—Contrast between the Jungle, or Fellah and Bedouin Arabs.—Kurds.—Religion.—Points of Similarity with the Scottish Highlanders.—Manners in Society and in Domestic Life.—Selim Aga.—Roostum Aga.—National Character.—Personal Appearance.—Women.—Turkomans.—Christian Population.—Nestorians, Chaldeans, or Syrians.—Divisions of Sects.—Early Progress of Christianity in the East.—Christian Bishops and Sees.—The Nestorian Heresy.—Condemnation of its Author.—Rise of the Jacobite Schism.—Its wide Dissemination.—Number of Sees.—Armenians and Roman Catholics.—Character of the Christian Population.—Chaldeans of Mount Jewar.—Sabæans.—Origin.—Tenets.—Persecution.—Places of Abode, and supposed Numbers.—Manicheans.—Doctrines of Manes.—History of the Sect.—Yezidees.—Supposed Origin.—Various Appellations.—Secrecy observed by them concerning their Religion.—Account of their Tenets so far as is known.—Tribes of the Sinjarli Yezidees.—Their Sacred Fountains and Repositories of Treasure.—Character by Rich.—Shaitan Purust and Chirag Koosh.—Their Origin.—Ali Ullahis.

The extensive and interesting countries which we have been endeavouring to describe, have at all times been inhabited by a very mixed population, consisting of many races, distinguished from each other by religion, by language, and by customs. Some of these have been already noticed; but it will be proper to particularize them somewhat more distinctly.

The great bulk of the inhabitants, besides the dominant race of Turks, is made up of Arabs, Kurds, Turkomans, Christians, and Jews. The first, as a matter of course, compose a considerable proportion of the population of the towns and large villages, filling nearly all civil and military offices; and they differ in no respect from the ordinary Osmanlis of the Turkish empire. With regard to the second, we have already remarked that Mesopotamia, from the line of the Hermas and Khabour southward, in-

cluding Babylonia and Chaldea, is now, as it always has been, principally peopled by Arabs, who, however, are not confined to those limits, but form no minute part of the population of Assyria, and are found in greater or smaller numbers even in the most northern parts.

Of the religion of these Arabs nothing more need be said than that they are Mohammedans of the Sonnee sect. In character, habits, and customs they resemble, in general, their brethren of the adjacent peninsula—from whence, at one period or other, they all originally came—although modified greatly by circumstances. They all lay claim to the qualities of hospitality, generosity, justice, incorruptible integrity, and fidelity to their promise, courage, love of independence, as much as they did in the days of Hatim Taee; yet they acknowledge themselves to be robbers and plunderers, attaching obviously no discredit to the act of seizing the property of strangers who may not have bargained with them for immunity as to person and goods. But, whatever may have been the case in former times, the Arabs of the present day, in the countries which we are describing, appear to have retained only the vices, while they have lost the virtues, of their forefathers; for, so little regard do they now pay to their oaths or to the true rights of a guest, that, though a traveller may be safe while in the tent of a Bedouin, the latter thinks it no breach of honour or humanity to send some one to attack him after he has quitted his roof, or even to stain his own hands with violence.

Fortunately, the Arab is not prone to bloodshed, nor fond of exposing his life to great hazard; so that, in cases of attack where the odds are not very great, a little firmness will bring him to reason. But, on the other hand, a useless opposition to a force who know their power, if pushed to extremities, is apt to lead to fatal consequences; for, when their blood has been rashly shed, they give no quarter. Their battles among themselves are seldom attended with serious casualties, victories being not unfrequently gained without the loss of a man. But this results as much from a reluctance to incur the consequences of a blood-feud as to expose their own persons.

These blood-feuds, as among all other semi-barbarous nations, are pregnant with horrible atrocities. Among those which are recorded of more remote times, there is

none more disastrous and melancholy than that which once distracted the great tribe of Montefic, consisting chiefly of two principal clans, the Malik and the Ajwad. The quarrel arose out of a question as to right of pasturage on certain tracts; and the former at length prevailed by exterminating their rival brethren. Excited to desperation by the songs and remonstrances of the women, every male of the Ajwad armed himself for battle, and fell in defence of the spot where his fathers had fed their flocks. But even this sanguinary triumph was insufficient to satisfy the jealous temper of Solyman, the leader of the victorious clan. Dreading future retribution, should even a single individual of the conquered tribe survive, he adopted the atrocious expedient of putting every female to death, and securing the destruction of progeny by the most appalling means. One alone, who had thrown herself at the feet of a Malik chief, was saved by his compassion at the imminent risk of his own life; for he was wounded and nearly cut in pieces while defending her. Of this young woman, who was pregnant at the time, was born Abdoollah, afterward the founder of a family, which, from the peculiar origin of its chief, received the appellation of the "Orphan's Tribe." The place of slaughter was one of those pleasant glens which, even in the steril and rocky soil of Arabia, are found among the mountains, where water may be everywhere obtained near the surface, and which in spring and early summer are covered with a rich verdure. That which was the scene of this disaster is to be seen about fifteen miles to the south of modern Bussora, and is still known as the *Wadi ul Nissa*, or the "Vale of Women," the name which it received upon that fatal occasion.

A catastrophe of a like nature, though confined to the fate of an individual, was witnessed not many years ago by an English traveller, who had chanced to become a guest in the tent of a sheik of the Beni Lam Arabs, as he was journeying through Kuzistan. In the absence of the chief, the honours were done to him by his daughter, a young woman, the only resident in the tent. Towards morning the stranger was roused from his sleep by shrieks, and soon distinguished the voice of his young hostess exclaiming that she was murdered. All rushed to the spot, where they found the unfortunate girl in the agonies of death, her breast pierced in three places with a dagger.

Mesopotamian Arabs and their Tents.

While gazing on the sight, and offering vain assistance, a voice was heard from a height close by, exclaiming, "Yes! it is I. I have done it. Praise be to God, I have murdered her." All eyes turned to the spot, where there was perceived an old woman gesticulating with the utmost vehemence. A rush was made towards her; and she either ran or was borne back to the brink of the river, on which the tents were pitched, and, falling from the high bank, was seen no more.

On inquiry, it appeared that this stern female was mother of a *pehlewan* or prize-fighter of another tribe, who, not long before, had killed a son of this sheik, an event which had excited the half-dormant feud in all its bitterness. A stranger soon afterward entering the camp, was received with the usual frankness, and hospitably entertained. Unfortunately, he was recognised by some one as the very pehlewan who had slain their patriarch's son; but he was now their guest, and, by the inviolable custom of the Arabs, could not be touched. The chief himself was absent; and the feelings of good faith and humanity were preponderating, when this young woman, sister of the deceased, entered the assembly, and upbraided the men with cowardice. "Shall the murderer of your sheik's son be here, and escape?" said she, vehemently. "Never let it be told; put him instantly to death." But still a reluctance to infringe the sacred principle in so glaring a manner restrained their hands, when the young girl herself, maddened with rage, seized a sword and smote the unfortunate man. The sight of blood was irresistible. In a moment every weapon was sheathed in his body, and he was literally cut in pieces. The head of the tribe returning, was horrified at the event, which he would fain have recalled or repaired. But the mother of the dead would accept no atonement; she followed the camp for years, thirsting for revenge, and she found her opportunity that night when the English traveller happened to be the guest of her victim.

Another English traveller,* now dead, gives the follow-

* Mr. Elliot, to whose manuscript papers the author was kindly permitted access by Colonel Taylor, the British resident at Bagdad. The gentleman here mentioned was a person of great enterprise and high acquirements; and, as he possessed the means of obtaining information which fall to the lot of few, the Notes which he left are of uncommon value, more especially as they respect the manners and domestic habits of the people.

ing sketches of his intercourse with some of the Arab clans on the banks of the Euphrates. Two natives accompanied him, travelling as dervishes skilled in the art of medicine; and having passed through certain Kurdish and Turkoman districts, they at length reached the precincts of the Beni Saeed. As they approached the tents, one of the leaders, Hamet el Jassin, threw himself on the ground before them, and remained prostrate, while the pretended priests passed over his body. "May the feet of all sheiks (holy men) be on my neck!" was his humble expression as they stepped over him; and one of the traveller's companions did actually respond to this aspiration by standing on the poor man's loins some time, while repeating a portion of the Koran. "Who are ye, fathers?" was the question put by the chief after undergoing this operation. "Dervishes going to Racca—to the tomb of Wasil Karanee: may God be satisfied with the act!" was the reply; "and one of us is a doctor and surgeon." No sooner was this fact announced, than forward pressed a crowd of invalids, real or feigned, to whom remedies were given gratis.

The sheik had, meantime, invited them into the catacomb in which he lodged; but he was not the chief of the tribe. This distinction was enjoyed by Dervish ibn Fakh ul Saeed, a man held in universal esteem even by the powerful tribe of Aneiza, who pay respect to few. There were others, however, of the horde whom the traveller honours with especial regard; and among them, Hamet ul Khaleel (or Hamet the Beloved), an old man, whom he describes as of striking appearance, "whose long white beard, waving in all directions, and bald head, half covered with the black silk handkerchief that bound it, gave a venerable air to his aspect; while his tall, gaunt figure, but gallant deportment, proclaimed that in his youth he had been that common character among Arabs, a martial fop. The hearty welcome, and frequent rounds of right good coffee, declared him to be what in truth he was, a generous, noble-hearted old fellow; and the term 'a father to the poor,' applied to him by the guide, described his character exactly."

The tribe of Beni Saeed, indeed, so far as the men are concerned, are favourably represented by our traveller; but the ladies, both of this and other nations, do not appear in his pages to equal advantage. He describes the

women from Shireen to Anah as in general tall and very plain, having an awkward and even masculine appearance; the old ones being absolutely hideous. "Unlike their pretty, lively neighbours, the Kurds, they are grumbling and discontented in the duties of the tent, and have nothing of that natural elegance which at first sight so much recommends the Bedouin and Arab females below Anah. Their unbecoming habits, and the screeching manner in which they converse, render them very repulsive to strangers. Not one decent-looking woman did I see among the hundreds who go uncovered during the Bairam.

"The ladies of the Beni Saeed go loaded with gold and silver coins and trinkets, of which a silver ring a foot in diameter, having small ones fixed to it by chains, and a gold and silver belt of five inches broad, were the most conspicuous." The men, he remarks, were particular about their accoutrements, insomuch that from the multitude of round brass bosses with which the numerous straps are covered, they appear as if they were in armour. Their dress is a shirt and a cloak; but if cold, they wear two. Furs are seldom seen; and shoes are used by very few. The rest, both horsemen and footmen, go with the feet naked. On an expedition of sudden emergency, all orders rush out in their shirts, tucking the skirts into their belts; and baring their arms by tying the ends of their sleeves over their shoulders, they stream away to the point of attack.

The following scene, witnessed on arriving at the camp of the Al Fadhlee Arabs at Racca, is characteristic: "When we entered, the fat Kurd (a person sent from a powerful chief in the neighbourhood with a dress of honour for the sheik) had occupied the place of honour where the master himself should have been seated. After the first salutation, I said, 'Is this the sheik?' and, taking from my pocket the letter directed to the chief of the Al Fadhlee, the Kurd put forth his hand, and as no one remonstrated, I gave it to him. He opened and read it, and then, addressing me in Turkish, asked the news from Bir. At this moment, in came Sheik Mustapha Hadjee Mohammed, attired in his robe of state, made of the worst kind of French cloth. He brought an enormous crowd with him, all of whom spoke at once; but his own stento

rian voice was heard far above the rest. To my astonishment, he even, at times, addressed persons in another tent.

"Here the rule appears to be different from that which prevails among other tribes, where everything is determined by the number of votes any man obtains. Every one spoke together; and it seemed to me that the loudest voice carried the argument. Whoever first entered the tent, came to the place or fixed his eye where he intended to sit. The signal is 'Salaam Alei coum!' on which room must be made in that particular spot; the man who had saluted then wedges himself down into his seat. Each fresh visiter is thus accommodated; even though he had been sitting in the same tent, and at a distance from the fire, he may come with his 'Salaam Alei coum!' and thus obtain a position near it. There is no respect shown to age or person, except, perhaps, to those who have the most impudence.

"The Kurd Ali Sinjar gave the letter to the sheik, who, being unable to read, sent for the moolah, who, after much difficulty, made it out. The chief, then turning to me, bawled out, in a tone far above the voices of the rest, each individual at the same time roaring out his opinion, and favouring me with directions about my future route. I never before witnessed such a scene of uproar; but it was one I had to witness every day and hour from hence to Anah. Five or six persons insisted upon asking me questions all at the same moment; and while I was replying to one, the rest would, on conjecture, answer their own inquiries, for the sheer love of speaking. 'Talk,' said my companion, Dervish Hoossein, 'is their fire, their clothing, and pillow.' The sheik, however, gained the day.

"I was much fatigued by the incessant noise and crushing of people before the fire; a circle three or four deep having been formed, which completely filled up the tent. The sheik lay near the blaze at full length; his son, a spoiled boy of fourteen, sat on our toes, turning round and *nudging* us with the points of his fingers (a common practice) as fast as he could frame questions to put to us. The crowd was so great, that when I tried to sit cross-legged, they sat down upon my knees. I begged Omar to act the part of physician in my room; upon which the Kurd Ali Sinjar, who retained the place of honour, and was raking the ashes with a crooked stick, first thrust forth his great

wrist. My friend pronounced his case to be one of the *reeah*, or 'the humours.' 'He is right,' said the Kurd; 'that is exactly my complaint.' We had divided our medicines into five classes; the first for the *reeah*, or humours; the second for headache; but the last, being prolific pills, was in most request."

They had miserable food all this time. "One meal in the morning and one at night was our best luck; and we had to carry between us a heavy knapsack; besides which, on arriving at an encampment, we had generally to wait for our suppers till after dark, that, as Hoossein said, we might not see the abominable trash they fed us with. It was always the same *itheree turmooz*, with *falsz* soup," which was thus made: Itheree, a sort of millet coarsely ground, is thrown into boiling water, and stirred round till it assumes the consistence of paste. The caldron is then turned over into a wicker tray, and the contents, made into the shape of bread, are baked on heated ashes or stones, brushwood being heaped and kindled over all. A quarter of an hour suffices for preparing the loaf, which is broken to pieces in the tray, and then placed in a wooden bowl. *Yelaun choorbeh*, a sort of *soup maigre*, is poured upon it, and it is eaten very hot; but its effects on the interior were such, that the more the travellers devoured, the more they seemed to require. It was unsatisfying to the appetite, and distressing in its consequences.

Their next stage was through the country of the Jungle or Forest Arabs, whom he describes as the very refuse of mankind—"worse than Russian boors, Bashkirs, or Calmucks;" their manners brutal, their conversation indecent, and the women as bad as the men, modesty being quite unknown. In crossing the Euphrates, the wives of the sheik and of his lieutenant stripped stark naked before the travellers, and passed the stream upon inflated skins. Their whole conduct was equally indecorous and disgusting. As happens among all wandering tribes, the women here were the principal labourers, striking and packing the tents and household stuff; the men only assisting in loading the oxen that carried them, for they had neither camels nor horses. The process of decamping scarcely occupied an hour, though there were above three hundred tents to remove.

On arriving at the new ground, the men clear the place,

cutting away the wood, and making a fence of loose branches five feet high. In this two openings are left, called *Bab ul Gunnum*—that is, gates for the sheep—to shut up which at night spare branches are left, as a protection at once against thieves and wild beasts. Lions abound; and a loud shouting was kept up almost the whole night to scare them away. But the dogs are the best guards, giving the alarm, in which the men join. It often happened that, while sitting at meals or in conversation, such a warning was heard, on which every one began to shout where he sat until the alarm ceased.

The ground being cleared, each individual takes his station exactly as in the last encampment, in order that the cattle may find their way to their respective homes with ease; yet they say the animals would find out their masters' huts even if the order were changed. The tents are opened out and beaten; the men knock in the pegs and raise the poles; the women set up the screens and arrange the tent, which is then brushed to take off the soot. Stakes are driven into the ground, and a rope passed across at the farther end, to which halters are fastened for the oxen. Itheree stalks are collected and thrown in for the cattle by the women; while the men, the laziest people on earth, do scarcely anything. On the whole, he gives a most deplorable account of these tribes, as being despicable cowards as well as thieves; but of the Aneiza, who plunder them, he talks in the highest terms. He dwells particularly on the difference in manner and appearance between the *fixed* Arabs and those of the Desert or Bedouin tribes, describing the latter as naturally noble, of manly carriage and animated features; the former as clownish, and ill-favoured both in face and figure. "A stranger," he assures us, "would scarcely be offended by being plundered by the Bedoui, while even a compliment from the cultivating Arab is disgusting. I know no better way to express the contrast." Nay, it appears that even in enforcing their demands upon the subject tribes, however absolute they may be, they are ever dignified and polite, "as if they were taking their own. In short, they may be termed the nobility and gentry of the Arabs, while the cultivators are the boors of the country." With this somewhat overstrained testimony in favour of the predatory bands, we shall take leave of those tribes.

The Kurds, in point of religion, are Sonnees like the Arabs, being also a predatory and turbulent race. Moreover, to a certain extent, they are of nomadic habits, though by no means so migratory as the wanderers of the desert. The following extracts may serve to convey some idea of their manners and character:

"Ooshnoo, the first truly Kurdish abode I have been domiciliated in, differed not externally from other Persian villages; but the costume of its inhabitants imparted to its interior a character which no Persian village could present. The khan himself was habited in the common garb, which I observe is adopted by all men of rank, whatever be their tribe or country, who have seen something of the world. The whole of his establishment, however, retained the Kurdish dress, with all their native wildness, and stood gazing on the stranger as if he were a man of other mould than they. And certainly, so far as antiquity has claims to regard, they have a good title to consideration; for they are probably the descendants of those who flourished in the days of Xenophon, of Julian, and Heraclius, and are just as proud, independent, and thievish as their ancestors. They are as devotedly attached to their mountains as the Scotch or Swiss; and, like the former, they are divided into clans or septs, acknowledging the supremacy of chiefs, who are regarded with the same devotion, and followed with the same blind zeal which used to distinguish the Highlanders in former days. They are proud, haughty, and overbearing exactly in proportion to their ignorance; and, like our own clans of old, despise, more or less, all arts but those of war and plunder, and all professions but that of arms.

"In a community so closely resembling that of the Highland families, it was interesting to notice the demeanour observed towards relatives and friends, and to trace the respective degrees of estimation assigned to the various grades of kindred or connexions. The mode of reception to each was varied and accurately defined; but the manner was kind and polite to every one. The master of the house yielded place to all visiters of equal or superior rank; but the arrangement of giving and taking this honour appeared to me to be conducted upon a kinder principle than reigns in the same ceremonial in Persia. It was obvious that precedence was not yielded to riches alone;

for I observed several persons of mean appearance and shabby apparel admitted to a high place in the assembly.

"When a friend or a relative arrived from the country the heads of the sept went to the door, or beyond it, to embrace him. The sons or nephews had probably given the first welcome when he dismounted; if not, they came in and saluted him each in turn; and there was in this reception a sort of pleasing eagerness, which put me quite in mind of old times at home; and really, the more I saw of the Kurds, the more did their resemblance to the ancient Highlanders strike me. The respect of the young for the aged was particularly remarkable. The son never sat down in the father's presence, nor the nephew in that of the uncle, except by especial desire, and then in a distant part of the room; yet there appeared no want of tenderness on the part of the elders, nor of willing and ready obedience or filial affection on that of the rising generation. At meals, though the victuals were brought in by servants who performed the more menial offices, the sons of the host waited on the guests and attended to their wants, handed water to drink, assisted them to such things as were out of reach, trimmed the lights, and exerted themselves to increase the comfort of all. The domestics, too, were treated with great consideration, and even familiarity, insomuch that it was some time before I could distinguish the relatives of the family from the hired assistants.

"The great, it is true—that is, the higher chiefs—affect more state. The khans have their *nazirs* or stewards, their head *peishkhidnuits* (body-servants), *furoshes*, and the like, in the same manner as the Persian noblesse; but I am now speaking of domestic manners, and these were marked by kindness and good feeling. There was an open-hearted simplicity about many of these Kurds that was very refreshing, and which often showed itself in a manner that amused while it pleased me. Among these, Azeez Beg was remarkable; not that his simplicity at all indicated weakness—it was rather the overflow of a guileless heart, which neither suspected others of deceit, nor desired to conceal a thought of its own.

"They were amused by my telling them that I was myself a native of a country not unlike Kurdistan; mountainous, and divided into tribes; often, in times of old, at war and feud with one another; and as fond as Kurds

could be of a *chuppou* or *raid* upon their lowland neighbours. They listened also with interest and pleasure to my descriptions of the attachment of clansmen to their chief, and the habits of Highlanders in former days; and the comparisons I drew between them and the Kurds elicited more from them than could otherwise have been gathered without offensive inquisitiveness."

The sketches now given apply to the general body rather than to individuals; the following represent the characters of two chiefs of the more predatory and smaller clans which are met with in the Assyrian plains.

"A few miles beyond the rocky descent of this hill, we stopped to breakfast at the miserable village of Janreze, the dwelling of Selim Aga, chief of the Daloo Kurds, a branch of the Bebehs of Solymaneah. On approaching it we observed spears and saddled horses; and, on our arrival there, found the beg preparing to go forth on a hunting party, for he was surrounded by attendants equipped for the saddle, holding greyhounds in the leash and hooded hawks on the fist. A word from our guide, who preceded us by a few yards, procured a courteous reception from this chief, who was a person of pleasing appearance, just past the middle age, with a grizzled beard, and mild, though firm features. He disclaimed the apology I tendered for our intrusion, which had obviously interrupted his projected expedition, and swore by the head of the pacha and his own eyes (to which he declared we had brought both light and delight) that we were welcome a thousand times. He only regretted that his accommodation was so poor, and his fare so bad, that he was ashamed of receiving us in such a manner. 'But we Kurds,' said he, 'are rough fellows at best; we live in the plains or in the hills, and never had much to boast of at any time; now the little we have is gone: what between prince and pacha, we are in a fair way to want bread. See,' continued he, taking up one of the black cakes they had set before us, with a little sour milk, 'see what we eat; our horses and we fare just alike. Once we were soldiers, and we thought of nothing but riding, and hunting, and hawking, and exercising with the spear and sword, for we had enough to live on, and our ryots cultivated our grounds; but now every man is forced to lay down his arms, and take to the *jooft* (the team that drags the plough), and

what is a soldier good for when once he has done that? But the pacha and the Persians will both have what they demand—so what is left to the ryot but flight?' 'Now this very mild and civil gentleman,' said I to the guide, as we rode away; 'this aga, who has made us so welcome, and given us so kind a reception—suppose no envoy from Solymaneah had been with us, and that we had met him and his followers in the open plain, I presume he would have made no scruple at robbing us if he could.'

"'By the head of Solyman Pacha,' replied the guide, laughing heartily, 'and by your own life, sir, you appear to know the man as well as I do myself; you have hit the mark exactly. Selim Aga is just the man for such a job; he would eat bread with you as your host, and after the *khoosh amedeed* and *khodah hafiz* (the welcome and farewell), he would tie up his beard, turn his turban, and disguise himself and his people so that you should not know them, and gallop ahead and waylay you, strip you naked, and leave you on the place. He is the completest *napak* (scoundrel) in all Kurdistan—the most remorseless ruffian; why, sir, that fellow has stripped women and left them in the desert: he would take their shift from their backs if it were worth threepence, even if they had not another rag.'

"'And is not all this held infamous even in Kurdistan?' demanded I. 'So infamous, sir, that I have not words to tell you how bad it is thought; but Selim Aga is a beast that has neither shame nor feeling.'"

Another of these semi-barbarous chieftains was Roostum, aga of the village Ibrahim Khanchee, and of a small tribe of Kurds. "We were received by his son; but in the evening he himself came, a jolly, good-humoured, dark-looking man, with a round face and a careless laugh, who received us with a boisterous civility. He was one of that sort of savages who are wonderfully good when they are not opposed; but the sudden cloud on the brow the moment he was contradicted, seemed to hint 'I can be a tyrant when I will.'

"We were a little reserved at first; though, as I make a point on all occasions to conciliate as much as possible, we soon came to an understanding: but he commenced after a curious fashion. Calling to my servant, who was standing in the room, he said, 'What is your name? How

long have you been with the saheb? Do you receive wages, or did any one send you with him? Are you pleased with his service?' and, after receiving replies to all these important queries, he added, in a good-humoured, blunt way, which showed him to be unaccustomed to denial, 'What pistols has your master? bring them to me.' I made a sign to bring the pistols, which were instantly in the chief's hands. When he saw that the holster pistols had percussion locks, he threw them aside with contempt, saying, 'Two of your *taifeh* (tribe) came here some time ago, and offered me a pair of these, but I would not have them: of what use would they be to me? these are what I like;' and he produced a much-worn pair of Mortimer's flint duelling pistols. 'But what else have you? The things I like are pistols, shawls, and scarlet cloaks, such as this. Have you any Cashmere shawls like this here? But I must go to prayers; never mind me.' So he spread his carpet beside me and commenced his devotions, but during much the greater part of the time all his attention was expended in giving orders to his people, and making inquiries of my servants about myself.

"The exhibition of some presents added to the good-humour of the bear, who then became facetious, and began to joke me upon a very common subject of reproach against Christians, the eating of hog's flesh, assuring me that, had he known of my arrival, he would have provided some, as he had seen a great herd of them feeding as he came along. I retorted, and accused him of also eating them. 'No, no,' said he, 'God forbid! they are unclean.' 'True,' I replied, 'but you eat hares, don't you?' 'To be sure,' said he; 'and capital things they are for a stew.' 'And foxes too?' asked I. 'No, no; only a few poor creatures eat these,' said he. 'Well, aga, but both *are* eaten here, and both are equally forbidden by your law; so we need not talk about the *lawfulness* of the thing; now let us come to the *reason* and common sense of it. What do wild hogs feed on, aga?' 'Why, on grass, acorns, corn, and the like,' said he. 'Good: there is nothing unclean in that, is there?' 'No, by no means.' 'Well, what do foxes live on, and herons, and other large water-fowl you eat?' 'Why, the foxes eat birds and small beasts, and the others fish and worms.' 'Well, then, which is the cleaner animal -they or the hogs?' 'He says the truth,' grumbled

the beg, with a whimsical laugh, to the people about him. But the aga had, it appeared, a good deal of superstition, for he would not eat out of the same dish with a European; and declared he had made a vow against wine. When told of the popular notion in Europe, that the spirits of murdered persons appear on earth in order to point out the guilty, or to the murderer himself to force him to confession, he was greatly struck with the idea, and exclaimed, '*Lah illah il ullah!* if such were to be the case here, who would ever rob or murder!'

"But the day of repentance for bloodshed and plunder had certainly not as yet come to Roostum Aga. He dwelt on the many frays he had been in, and the spoil he had taken, with a zest and earnestness which showed how strong the evil principle was yet in him. He told me he had been wounded at least a dozen times, in spite of the best of armour. 'I have it of every kind,' said he, 'and at one period I used always to wear it, but I have learned to put but little trust in it: my trust is in heaven;' and he spoke with as firm and assured a tone as if his cause had been the most righteous on earth.

"He lamented, however, the evil days on which the present race of Kurds had fallen. The golden times of Kurdistan were gone, he said. 'Ride over the country, and what spirit, what show of gallantry will you find? All the good horsemen and stout soldiers are dead, or have fled to other lands; or they have taken to the plough in order to feed their wives and children.' When I suggested that the roads were not yet quite safe, and alluded to some symptoms I had observed of old practices—'Ah,' replied he, 'that is nothing; only a few "looties" here and there; no dashing bands of horsemen now to be met with; but be content: I, Roostum Beg, am pledge for *your* safety; nothing shall touch you between this and Kufri; you are a good fellow, an excellent fellow, and I like you; by your head I do; be satisfied; you shall see Kufri in safety.'"

The appearance and character of the Kurds are thus summed up. "Like other men and nations, they are the creatures of education and circumstance, but are possessed of natural qualities that might be turned to excellent account. Bold they are, and hospitable after a fashion; but this last virtue has been sadly dimmed of late years by poverty and oppression. Like most pastoral and patri-

archal people, they are distinguished by a strong love of kindred, which renders their quarrels fierce and bloody, each being perpetuated by a series of remorseless murders. Far from cruel by nature, these feuds and the love of war have made them reckless of spilling blood, and caused them to estimate life at less value than it is held in more peaceful countries; yet the recollection of consequences tends in some degree to repress this ruthless spirit, and restrains the passions in a manner which pity or a sense of crime would never effect: a compensation for the want of that more regular control which is ever found under like circumstances of society.

"In person the Kurds are well made and active, differing perhaps in that respect but little from their neighbours the Persians. The national features, however, are very peculiar. The cast of countenance is sharp, the form of the face oval, the profile remarkable, owing to the prominence of the nose, and the comparative retrocession of the mouth and chin, which communicate to its outline a semicircular shape. The eyes are deep-set, dark, quick, and intelligent; the brow ample and clear, but somewhat retreating; and the general mould of the features by far more delicate than those of the Persians, which are usually somewhat too strong. In Kurdistan you would look in vain for a snub nose. The mouth is almost always well-formed, and the teeth fine; the hands and fingers are small and slender. In short, there is something of elegance in their form, which would mark them as a handsome nation in any part of the world.

"The same remarks apply to the women, so far as I have had opportunities of observation. When young they are exceedingly pretty; but when old, or even at what, with us, would scarcely be deemed maturity, the sharp prominence of feature which characterizes them, in common with the men, is unfavourable to beauty, and they soon appear faded and withered. Frequent occasions presented themselves for observing these particulars, as they do not wear veils like the Persian females. The utmost that is practised in this way is to bring the end of the handkerchief which covers their heads across the mouth and chin. I regret that it is little in my power to follow them into their privacy, and describe their domestic duties; but, from what I do know, I have reason to believe that their life

and occupations resemble in all respects those of the same order in Persia. Ladies of the richer class who live in towns remain in the harems of their husbands or fathers, and veil when they go abroad. The poorer, and all, indeed, who spend their days in villages or tents, perform the laborious duties which, in more civilized countries, belong to the men."

There are, besides the Kurds and Arabs, many tribes of Turkomans to be found in the extensive plains and waving downs of Upper Mesopotamia. These originally formed a portion of the Tartar tribes, which, under various invaders, conquered the country, and have permanently settled there. They are Sonnees in point of faith; of predatory habits like their neighbours, and principally pastoral in their modes of life.

The Christian population, though scattered more or less over the whole region, is most numerous in the northern parts of both provinces. In several districts of Upper Mesopotamia they form the bulk of the labouring classes; and in the vicinity of Mosul and of Mardin, and the mountainous country to the north and east of these places,* the greater number of villages are entirely peopled with various denominations of believers. Of these the first to be mentioned are the Nestorians, Chaldeans, or Syrians, as they are indifferently termed, and who are subdivided into two sects: those who have acknowledged the supremacy of the Roman pontiff, and those who adhere to their ancient faith; secondly, the Jacobites, who also have undergone a like subdivision; thirdly, the Armenians, who cling to their own church and patriarch; and, fourthly, a very few who acknowledge an adherence to the Romish communion.

As a full account of these several sects would amount to a history of Christianity in the East from its earliest origin, a short sketch of the leading facts must suffice; referring those of our readers who may be anxious to know more to the laborious and very erudite work of Assemani,† who has brought together everything that industry could collect upon the subject.

* The Rev. Horatio Southgate, missionary, and a late traveller in these parts, considers Mardin as the chief place and centre of the Syrian Christians. His work contains many particulars on this subject.

† Bibliotheca Orientalis, 4 vols. folio, Rome, 1719-1728.

Christianity appears to have made very early progres. in these countries. The apostles Peter, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, Judas the son of James, and Thaddæus, also called Lebæus, are among those of the twelve inspired missionaries who are said to have preached to the Chaldeans and Assyrians. Besides which, many of the seventy had a share in this office; and Adæus, who was sent hither by St. Thomas, was put to death at Edessa on his return from Persia, Assyria, and Babylonia, by Abgarus, the celebrated king of that state or province.

Christianity made its first appearance in the East during the reign of Artabanes in Persia; and even in the first century the Church had become considerable enough to prove a cause of uneasiness to the Persian king. In the second century, the believers were persecuted by Trajan in his expedition, but they appear, notwithstanding, to have gained ground rapidly; for we hear of a great schism attributed to a bishop named Papas, in the end of the third and beginning of the fourth century; and Shapoor, about A.D. 330, not only put to death St. Simeon Barsaboe, bishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, then 117 years old, but likewise twenty-two other bishops, besides minor functionaries, and many individuals of their flocks. At this time the see of Seleucia and Ctesiphon was called Cuchensis, and here the patriarch resided until the year of the Hejira 140, when Almansor, the Abbasside caliph, having built Bagdad, the seat of the chief minister was removed thither.

The Nestorian heresy occurred in the fifth century, about the year 431, when the author of it was condemned by the synod of Ephesus for his doctrines, and died in exile about 439. But these tenets spread far and wide over the East; and the seat of the patriarch appears to have been removed from Bagdad to Amida or Diarbekir, where it was occupied by a long line of patriarchs of the names of Simeon and Elias.

About the middle of the sixteenth century a schism occurred in the Nestorian Church. Simeon Mama, after a presidency of some years, was succeeded by Simeon Bar-Mama, who, being elected in opposition to a certain ecclesiastic of high pretensions, John Sulaca, was exposed to some trouble. Sulaca, thus disappointed, taking with him a considerable body of the priesthood, repaired to

Rome, and signified to the pope his adhesion to the church, on which his holiness acknowledged him as patriarch of the Catholic Nestorians.

The schism was maintained by the successors of these rivals. Elias, who followed Sulaca, opposed and persecuted Simeon Denha, next in order to Simeon Bar-Mama, at Diarbekir, until he finally forced him to quit his see, and take refuge in the province of Zein al Bech, in the mountains of Ormi, near the confines of Armenia, where his successors, assuming the distinctive name of *Simeon*, remain to this day. Since that time there have been two distinct patriarchs of the Nestorians; the one, under the name just given, continues to rule his flock in the mountains of Jewar, following the primitive faith; the other, called Elias, formerly residing in Bagdad, occupies the monastery of St. Hormisdas, near Mosul, and is the head of the Catholic Nestorians. It appears, moreover, that towards the end of the seventeenth century, the efforts of missionaries from Italy had occasioned so many of them to abjure their errors and embrace the Romish belief, that Pope Innocent XI. was induced to constitute for them a new patriarch named Joseph, whose seat was fixed at Caramit or Diarbekir. These heretics, in the earlier ages of the Church, appear to have been numerous, and spread over the whole of Central Asia. Of their numbers at the present day no calculation can be made; but, according to the information of their countryman Rassam,* the sees of both sects are reduced to nine, viz., Diarbekir, Sert, Jezirah, Mosul and Al Kosh, Amadieh, Kojannes, Selmast, Ooroomia, Bagdad.

The Jacobite schism appears to have occurred about the year 550, originating with a monk named Jacob, who propagated the doctrine that there is but one nature in Christ. Of these, also, there are two sects, each of which has its patriarch; the one following the rites of the Latin Church, the other remaining separate. Divine service is performed by their priests in the Chaldean language, but the mass is said in Hebrew. They believe in transubstantiation, and honour the holy sacrament when borne by Romish priests

* A very intelligent person, son of the bishop at Mosul, who accompanied the late Euphrates expedition as interpreter, and is now associated with that sent by the Royal Geographical Society into Kurdistan and Mesopotamia.

to sick persons; whereas the Syrians of the Greek Church refuse this respect to the Eucharist if consecrated by those who acknowledge the pope.

The Jacobite patriarchs originally took their title from Antioch, but only the earlier of their number resided there. It would appear that *Tagritis* (Tecreet) was one of their original seats: from thence they removed to Mar Mattei, near Mosul, the see of which place was joined to that convent. In the time of Niebuhr, the titular patriarch of Antioch resided at Diarbekir; but, according to Assemani, the sect appears to have been very numerous and widely diffused, for he gives a list of upward of fifty dioceses in Mesopotamia, Assyria, and Babylonia alone. These, it is probable, did not all exist at the same period, and some of them were very small; but their number implies a dense population and a considerable flock.

Of the Armenians and Roman Catholics there is little to be said. The first are chiefly found in towns, pursuing the profession of merchants or craftsmen: the latter, though so few as to constitute but an inconsiderable portion of the population, are more scattered over the country. There is at Bagdad a vicar appointed by the authority of Rome to look after this small flock, which does not, we believe, increase at the present moment.

Of the character of the Christians in that part of Asiâ, the little we know is not very favourable. Uneducated and oppressed, forced still more than their Mohammedan neighbours to cringe and deceive the despots who rule and pillage them, with no fit preceptors to teach them the value either of morality or religion, it is not to be expected that the cardinal virtues can flourish among them. Accordingly, we hear them spoken of with but little respect. Mr. Rich alludes to the dirt and bad order of their villages, the squalidity and drunkenness of their inhabitants. Rassam, again, though son of the Bishop of Mosul, classes them with the rest of the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, as being vicious from habit as well as education; asserting, however, that those who live in towns are industrious, carrying on useful trades, especially in cotton-cloth and cutlery. The villagers, he adds, who cultivate the land in summer, manufacture calicoes in winter.

The Nestorians of the mountains, those, namely, who inhabit the highlands of Kurdistan from Ooroomia to Mo-

sul, are, he says, a very different race from those of the plains. They have numerous gardens, the produce of which they lay up for winter store; and they barter gall-nuts, yellow-berries, goats' hair and down, sheep's wool, dried fruits, wax, honey, tobacco, cheese of an excellent quality, and sheep, for wheat and other necessaries. Their tobacco, in particular, is excellent.

These people are said to be handsome and strongly made, great hunters, and excellent marksmen, never going without their arms, and knowing well how to use them; in short, their countryman Rassam gives pretty much the same account of them as others do.

There is yet another sect of Christians found in the regions we are now describing, although their religion is of very doubtful character. These are the Sabæans, often called Christians of St. John Mendai, or Mendai Jaja by themselves, and Sabbi by the Arabians and Persians. They are sometimes also described as Chaldeans or Syrians, for there is reason to suppose that the creed of both was originally the same. Their descent has, according to some authors, been referred to Saba, the son of Cush, whose progeny are understood to have occupied the remote parts of the peninsula bordering on the Persian Gulf. But they themselves contend for the truth of a tradition which deduces them from those Arabians who were baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan.

It would appear, however, that they originally came from Haran, in Mesopotamia, and that, till the time of Julian the Apostate, they continued to be idolaters, worshipping the planets and host of heaven; after which they adopted certain of the Manichæan errors, and by degrees their sacrifices, especially of a cock and a ram. About A.D. 770, according to Abulfaragius, they were identified with a class of heretics who were put to death by the Caliph Haroun al Raschid for infamous practices.

That the portion who in later ages have been known as Sabæans did, however, embrace Christianity according to the Nestorian persuasion, is certain, although the sect has for a long time degenerated into a very questionable form. About A.D. 1480 they refused obedience altogether to the Patriarch of Babylonia, and separated themselves entirely from that church. They are said to worship one God, to revere angels and the stars, to read the Psalms of David,

but chiefly to pay regard to certain books, written in Chaldaic characters so ancient as now to be almost unknown, and which they attribute to Adam. They also preserve and repeat sayings of Seth and Enoch. They pray seven times a day, fast a month before the vernal equinox, regard as holy the city of Haran in Mesopotamia, and make pilgrimages to it. They hold as saints Sabin ben Edris (a son of Enoch), and Sabin ben Mari (a contemporary of Abraham); respect the Pyramids of Egypt, in one of which they say a son of Sabin ben Edris was buried; and also pay some regard to the Temple of Mecca.

In the times of the Ommiad caliphs, the Sabæans, being severely treated, emigrated into Persia and the lower parts of Chaldea, where they remained until after the death of Tamerlane. They were then once more subjected to a rigorous persecution by a certain chief, Mubarick, who, having seized on that part of the country, sought to exterminate the nation. This violence forced them to disperse among the neighbouring countries; some went to Haweeza; some to Dorak, to Shuster, Dezphool, Rumez, or Minas; others remained in Bussora, Jessayer, and other places; while a third party proceeded to Babylonia. Assemani* considered that in his day their numbers might amount to 20,000 or 25,000 families; and they continue still to reside in the places we have named.

Among other peculiar customs of this people, it is said that, in order to prevent the violation of their sepulchres, they seal the grave-clothes with a certain signet, on which are engraved the figures of a lion, a wasp, and a scorpion, surrounded by a serpent; and the following story implies a belief that the charm was effectual: Nadir Shah, for the purpose of maintaining the efficiency of his army and preventing desertion, made the byractars or ensign-bearers answerable for the appearance of every man under their respective colours; and in all cases of casualties, these officers were obliged to produce the nose of the deceased as a proof of his death. It happened that a desertion occurred in a corps at Dezphool in Kuzistan, and the byractar of the company, in order to escape punishment, bethought himself of the expedient of taking the necessary token from the visage of the last-buried person in the place.

* Bib. Orien., vol. iv., p. 610.

This, as it happened, was a Sabæan, which sect is numerous there. Accordingly, certain persons were sent in the night to effect the desired purpose; but in vain did they attempt to open the grave. The guardian animals and reptiles assumed so fierce an attitude, that the disturbers of the dead, after many efforts, withdrew, and, conscience-smitten, repaired next morning to the dwelling of the chief priest, and told their tale. "I thank God," said the hierarch, "that our protectors have not yet lost their power; but at the end of the third day, should ye visit the tomb, ye will suffer no disturbance." The men, however, preferred some other resource, and left the grave of the Sabæan unmolested.

In enumerating the various sects that have appeared in Mesopotamia, it would be wrong to omit some notice of the Manichæans, although their title to the name of Christian may be justly questioned. Manes, the first propagator of the heresy, appeared in the reign of Shapoor, who, it seems, had been in some degree won over to the new doctrines; and Hormuzd, his successor, embraced them. But Bahram, his son, adhering to the faith of his fathers, inveigled the pretended prophet from his stronghold at Descara, and put him to a cruel death, killing or making slaves of all his followers.

The religion he taught appears to have been an attempt to ingraft some of the Christian doctrines upon the tenets of the ancient Gnostics and the religion of the Magi. He recognised the two distinct principles of Good and Evil, whom he represented as always contending with each other. The good was the light in which God sat enthroned; darkness was the abode of evil. After the creation of Adam, who for a while lived holy, the spirit of evil prevailed, and he fell. To repair this mischief, God formed two beings of eminent dignity from his own essence: the one, *Christ*, to whom Manes appears to have applied and accommodated the character and actions of the Persian god Mithras, and the other the Holy Ghost; which two, with himself, constituted a perfect deity under a threefold appellation.

After using the ministry of angels a long time to bring back mankind from the evil of their ways, Christ was sent on earth. The Jews, instigated by the Prince of Darkness, put him, apparently, to death. But his mission was ful-

filled, and he returned to his throne within the sun, leaving his apostles to propagate his word, and promising the Comforter, or *Paraclete*, whom Manes asserted to be himself. Such is a slight sketch of his scheme of faith; his system of morals appears to have been more perfect. He inculcated on all his followers a life of virtue, combined with great moderation and temperance; while on the *Elect*, or chosen few, he enjoined the greatest austerity, privation, and voluntary poverty. Their food was to be just sufficient to support life; while celibacy and abstinence from every pleasure were absolutely insisted on. The Scriptures were read at their meeting for public worship, as well as the writings of Manes. They observed the two Christian sacraments, baptizing after the Catholic fashion; fasted on the Lord's day; kept Easter and Pentecost; and, in the month of March, celebrated the anniversary of the martyrdom of Manes.

The Yezidees, as they are called, are a far more singular, though a less numerous race than the Christian population, and not the less interesting that their origin remains quite uncertain. Their principal abode for a considerable time past has been in the mountainous range of Sinjar, in Mesopotamia; but they are also pretty numerous in Assyria, particularly in the neighbourhood of Mosul and ancient Nineveh, where there are many villages entirely inhabited by them. Indeed, there are some circumstances which might lead to the conclusion that their original seat was rather in that part of Assyria than in Mesopotamia.

This people, we learn from Niebuhr and Rich, call themselves Dassinis or Dawassinis, not Yezidees, which appellation appears to be a term of reproach bestowed upon them by the Mohammedans, who hate them.

On everything relating to their origin, their religion, and customs, they maintain a profound silence. The best-informed of their Sonnee neighbours and of the Christians of those parts, judging from what they have seen, not less than from what they have heard, say that they are the descendants of those Arabs who, under the directions of Shummur, the servant or follower of Yezid bin Moaviah, put Hassan, the son of Ali, to death. They are led to this belief, it appears, because, as they assert, Shummur is regarded as a great saint by the Dawassinis; and the Sheahs, in consequence, hold it meritorious to kill any of this sect.

The author of their religion is understood to be Sheik Adi, one of the Merwanian caliphs, who is interred at a place called by his name in the vicinity of Mosul, and which was formerly a Christian church dedicated to St. Thaddeus. Their enemies accuse them of worshipping Satan, whom they invoke by the name of *Chelebee* or Lord. Others maintain that they venerate the sun and fire, and practise horrible ceremonies. It is said they pay regard to sundry images of animals; to that of the serpent, in memory of the seduction of Eve by that reptile, and to that of the ram, in remembrance of the obedience of Abraham. Once a year, also, they worship the figure of a cock, which is called Mellek Taous, placed before the assembly upon a sort of candlestick.

The Yezidee religion appears to be a compound of many others strangely jumbled together. Niebuhr, indeed, remarks, that when asked regarding their faith, they themselves declare it to have part of the Christian, Mussulman, and Jewish. Mr. Rich observes that they have something approaching to Christianity. They admit both baptism and circumcision, the first of which is performed by dipping three times in one of their sacred springs; and they never enter a Christian church without kissing the threshold and pulling off their shoes. Buckingham* says that when they come to Mardin and other places, they kiss the hands of the priests, and receive the sacrament from them, suffering not a drop of the wine to fall to the ground, or even on their beards, while drinking it.

They fast three times in the year, and make one pilgrimage to the shrine of Sheik Adi. They believe in the metempsychosis, and never say "such a one is dead," but "he is changed." Like the Druses, they always choose Mohammedan names.

Their principal place of burial is at Bozan, at the foot of the mountain of Rabban Hormuzd; but the great scene of pilgrimage is Sheik Adi, where is the church already mentioned, and in which each tribe has its separate compartment. The priest or sheik reads prayers, and every one, at intervals, exclaims Amen! At this station there is a spring of water, which falls into a basin, and is used as one of their baptismal fonts. Niebuhr mentions that they

* Travels in Mesopotamia, vol. i., p. 470.

are in the habit of throwing into it gold and silver in honour of the sheik; a practice which, being discovered by a Nestorian in the neighbourhood, he contrived one night to enter the enclosure in pursuit of these treasures. The daughter of the keeper, having accidentally gone thither to draw water while the thief was searching the reservoir, conceived it could be no other than Sheik Adi himself come to inspect the offerings, and retired immediately to tell the extraordinary news. The Dawassinis were enchanted with the honour done them by their saint, while the Nestorian took care to keep his secret and the money.

There is said to be a similar basin at Sinjar, which is applied to the same uses. This came to the ears of the celebrated Solyman Pacha of Bagdad, who, thinking he could turn the sheik's treasure to better account, visited the place with a powerful force; but, though he succeeded in dispersing the tribes of Sinjarlis, and put many to the torture of the bastinado, he failed in discovering the treasury.

The Yezidees are said to be a lively, brave, and hospitable people, good-humoured, well made, and comely. Those of Sinjar may be divided into fixed and roving inhabitants. The former cultivate the village grounds, and resemble the Fellah Arabs, as the mountaineers do the Bedouins. The latter, who are the plunderers, are the terror of caravans on this road; and who, permitting their hair and beard to grow, wear an aspect as uncouth as their manners are savage. No one is suffered to approach their haunts except a few Jews, who live in the town Khatuniyah, situated on an island in a lake of that name, and who act as brokers in disposing of the goods that are taken by the marauding parties.

In reference to the origin of the Yezidees, or, as they are sometimes called in the East, *Shaitan purust*—Worshippers of Satan—we are tempted to mention a curious legend which exists in Seistan, an eastern province of Persia, among the inhabitants of which are not only many fire-worshippers or ghebres, but a considerable number of these *Shaitan purust*, and of another pagan sect called *Chirag Koosh*, or Light-extinguishers, who seem to be but a modification of the former, as both venerate or deprecate Satan. The account is as follows:

In former times there existed, they say, a prophet named Hanlalah, whose life was prolonged to the measure of

1000 years. He was their ruler and benefactor; and as, by his agency, their flocks gave birth to young miraculously once a week, though ignorant of the use of money, they enjoyed all the comforts of life with much gratitude to him At length, however, he died, and was succeeded by his son, whom Satan, presuming on his inexperience, tempted to sin by entering into a large mulberry-tree, from whence he addressed the successor of Hanlalah, and called on him to worship the Prince of Darkness. Astonished, yet unshaken, the youth resisted the temptation. But the miracle proved too much for the constancy of his flock, who began to turn to the worship of the devil. The young prophet, enraged at this, seized an axe and a saw, and prepared to cut down the tree, when he was arrested by the appearance of a human form, who exclaimed, "Rash boy, desist! turn to me, and let us wrestle for the victory. If you conquer, then fell the tree."

The prophet consented, and vanquished his opponent, who, however, bought his own safety and that of the tree by the promise of a large weekly treasure. After seven days, the holy victor again visited the tree to claim the gold or fell it to the ground; but Satan persuaded him to hazard another struggle, on promise that, if he conquered again, the amount should be doubled. The second rencounter proved fatal to the youth, who was put to death by his spiritual antagonist; and the result confirmed the tribes over whom he had ruled in their worship of the tree and its tutelary demon.

In this legend, the leading doctrine of all these Eastern religions—the constant contention between the powers of good and evil—is plainly shadowed forth, with the additional moral, that as long as he was actuated by a disinterested zeal for religion, the young prophet was victorious over the spirit of evil, but failed so soon as that zeal gave place to a sordid cupidity for earthly treasure.

This legend becomes still more interesting when compared with the following passage, which is taken from Assemani,* in the part where he treats of the religions of Mesopotamia and Assyria: "According to the natives of the country, the Yezidees were at one time Christians, who, however, in the course of ages, had forgotten even

* Vol. iii., p. 493.

the fundamental principles of their faith. I am, nevertheless, not inclined to believe this their origin; for I am of opinion that the word Yezidee is derived from *Yezid*, which in the idiom of Persia signifies *God*. Yezidee, therefore, the plural of Yezid, indicates the observators of superstitious doctrines (as may be seen from *Antonio Gyges*, Tesoro della Lingua Arabrica). Yezid was, in fact, the name of the idol which Elias, bishop and missionary of Mogham, overthrew with three blows of an axe; and this fact sustains the opinion I have advanced. Monseignore Tommaso, bishop of Marquise, who lived in the commencement of the ninth century, relates that when this Elias, after having been chosen Bishop of Mogham, a city on the frontiers of Persia, and near the Caspian Sea, proceeded to enter on the duties of his diocese, he found it occupied by a barbarous people immersed in superstition and idolatry.

"The bishop, however, commenced his instructions, and his flock confessed that they received them with pleasure, were convinced of their truth, and were inclined to return to the true God, but that they were terrified at the thought of abandoning Yezid, the object of religious veneration of their ancestors. This idol, they said, conscious of approaching rejection and contempt, would not fail to revenge itself by their total destruction. Elias desired to be led to this object of their adoration. They conducted him to the summit of a neighbouring hill, from whence a dark wood extended into the valley below. From the bosom of this rose a plane-tree of enormous height, majestic in the spread of its boughs and deep obscurity of its shade; but, transported with holy zeal, he demanded a hatchet, and rushing to the valley, sought the idol, whom he found lowering with a dark and menacing aspect. Nothing daunted, however, he raised the axe, smote down the image of the Prince of Darkness, and continued his work till not only was the mighty tree laid prostrate, but every one of the numerous younger shoots, termed by the barbarians the children of Yezid, were likewise demolished." The similarity of these two legends, coming from such opposite quarters, is very remarkable, and can scarcely be quite accidental.

In addition to the religious sects already mentioned, we must not omit to mention that of the Ali Ullahis, who take their name from one of their tenets, which taught that the Spirit of God has appeared on earth in a succession of in-

carnations, one of which was in the person of Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammed; in other words, that *Ali* was *God*, as the term signifies. Of the other articles of their faith we are but ill informed, as they, like the Yezidees, being regarded with ill-will by the dominant sect of the Mohammedans, maintain great secrecy on all matters that respect their religious opinions. By some they are held to be the same with the Chirag Koosh, who have some abominable rites and customs. But this is certainly not the case; and some of the most powerful tribes of Kermanshah and Mount Zagros, as the Gouran, and Zengenah, and Kelhore, are Ali Ullahis.

CHAPTER XV.

Natural History.

Introduction. GEOLOGY.—First District—Primary Rock.—Keban Silver and Lead Mines.—Copper Mines.—Carbonaceous Marls and Sandstones.—Coal.—Second District—Supercretaceous Deposite.—Limestone Deposite.—Compact Chalk.—Plutonic Rocks.—Formations near Orfa and Mosul.—Marble.—Sulphur Springs.—Mines.—Hills of Kurdistan.—Calcareous Gypsum.—Hill of Flames.—Kufri Hills.—Hamrine.—Formation of Euphrates.—Gypseous.—Plutonic Rocks.—Marls.—Hills of Denudation.—Sand Hills.—Naphtha Springs.—Third District—Limits.—Moving Sand Hills.—Salt Efflorescences.—Marshes.—Water Country. BOTANY.—First or Mountain District—Forest Trees.—Cultivated Plants.—Gallnuts.—Gum Arabic.—Manna.—Second District—Plains of Assyria.—Spring Flowers.—Summer.—Common Plants.—Potherbs.—Fruits.—Cultivated Plants.—Vegetables.—Third District—Alluvial.—Succulent Plants.—Grasses.—Sedges.—Babylonian Willow.—Limit between the Land and the Water.—Mariscus Elongatus. ZOOLOGY.—Mammalia of *First District*—Plantigrade Carnivora.—Felines.—Rodents.—Ruminants.—Angora.—Taurus.—Goat.—*Other Districts*—Bats.—Insectivora.—Carnivora.—Lions.—Tigers.—Chaus.—Lynx.—Hyenas.—Wolves, &c.—Domestic Cats.—Dogs.—Turkoman Dog.—Rodents.—Pachydermata.—Boar.—Horse.—Ass.—Ruminants.—Dromedary.—Camels.—Gazelle.—Sheep.—Bovidæ.—Ornithology—Raptores.—Vultures.—Eagles.—Owls.—Incessores.—Cranes.—Nightingale.—Larks.—Sparrows.—Bee-eaters, &c.—Game-birds.—Grouse.—Partridges.—Cursores.—Ostrich.—Grallatores.—Palmipedes.—Reptiles—Tortoises.—Lizards.—Frogs, &c.—Fishes.—Insects.

The limited sources of information regarding the natural history of Assyria and Mesopotamia, and the incompleteness of such as do exist, instead of leading us to dismiss

the subject with a few cursory generalities, have rather induced us to collect with the utmost care all the materials we could procure. These, indeed, are few, for of older authorities we believe there are none; and this remark includes, as already hinted, the learned Forskal, whose researches do not embrace those countries. It is true that the eminent Danish naturalist supplied a DESCRIPTION OF ANIMALS in his Oriental Itinerary,* as also a FLORA of Egypt and Arabia;† but Oriental is a wide word, and Forskal laboured chiefly in the neighbourhood of Alexandrea; while the Arabia he examined was not the vast plains of the Petræa and Deserta which border upon Mesopotamia, but a small portion of the promontory of Arabia Felix, near Mocha; and both these districts are distant not less than a thousand miles from the regions which now engage our attention. Hence, though we do not mean to deny that some useful analogies in botany and zoology may be drawn from his works, yet all inferences of this nature must be deduced with the greatest caution. Under these circumstances, we must have recourse to such notices as can be procured from modern travellers, few of whom are professed naturalists. A distinguished exception, however, occurs in the case of the recent expedition to the Euphrates, under the charge of Colonel Chesney. Without the documents published in connexion with this survey, and especially the Researches of Mr. Ainsworth, so often already alluded to, we could not have supplied any notice whatever on this interesting subject. From that publication we have drawn with the utmost freedom; and beg now, once for all, to acknowledge our obligation to the labours and authority of the enlightened author. At the same time, we have not neglected whatever other sources of information we could discover; and hence we presume to hope that the following description will not be found devoid either of interest or instruction.

* Descriptiones Animalium quæ in Itinere Orientali observavit Petrus Forskal. Hauniæ, 1775.

† Flora Ægyptiaco-Arabica, sive Descriptiones Plantarum quas per Ægyptum Inferiorem et Arabiam Felicem detexit, illustravit P. Forskal. Hauniæ, 1775.

GEOLOGY.

In this sketch of the physical formation and natural history of the districts included in the basins of the Euphrates and the Tigris, we shall adopt the very natural and simple plan suggested by Mr. Ainsworth, when he observes that Assyria, including Taurus, is distinguished into three Districts: By its *structure*, into a district of plutonic and metamorphic rocks, a district of sedimentary formations, and a district of alluvial deposites: by *configuration*, into a district of mountains, a district of stony or sandy plains, and a district of low watery plains: by *natural productions*, into a country of forests and fruit-trees, of olives, wine, corn, and pasturage, or of barren rocks; a country of mulberry, cotton, maize, tobacco, or of barren clay, sand, pebbly or rocky plains; and into a country of date-trees, rice, and pasturage, or a land of saline plains.

First District.—That part of the Taurus which is connected with the basins of the Euphrates and the Tigris has been divided into three portions. The most northerly range comprises the Niphates Mountains; the central comprehends the Azarah Dag, and the mountainous country between Kebban-Madan and Kharput; and the most southerly, the ancient Masius, including the Karah-jah Dag, Jibel-tur, and the Baarem Hills. The central nucleus of these vast ridges consists of granite, gneiss, and mica-schist, associated with limestone, greenstone, and hornblende; the lateral formations are composed of diallage rocks, serpentine and slate clays, and the outlying ones of sandstone and limestone. The structure of the Niphates Mountains has not yet, we believe, been scientifically examined; the Azarah Dag chain is formed of diallage rocks, serpentine, steatite, and limestone; the Jibel-tur, of various limestones and the chalk formation; the Baarem Hills consist of greenstone and basalt. The most northerly range is probably the highest of the Taurus, towering above the line of perpetual snow, which in this latitude may be estimated at the height of about 10,000 feet; the crest of the second range, viewed as a mean between the highest points and the passes, is about 5053; and the plain of Diarbekir, between the second and third district, is at an elevation of 2500 feet.

We commence our more particular survey in the central

range with the hills about Kebban-Madan, near the junction of the eastern and western branches of the Euphrates, and where the lead and silver mines occur. The town of Kebban, connected with the mines, is built upon granite rock, which extends downward to the banks of the river, and northward rises nearly a thousand feet in mountainous masses. The formations to the south of the town are very various. The fundamental rock is a highly crystalline granite, on which is superimposed gneiss rock, capped with chlorite schist, through which felspathic rock protrudes in dikes, or unconformable and non-contemporaneous beds. The first metalliferous product that is met with appears to be chlorite of silver, with an admixture of iron and lead; and it appears in dark-coloured irregular masses, like the formation of the same kind which overlies mines of native silver in Peru. Between the mica and chlorite slate and the limestone are numerous mines of argentiferous galena or lead-glance, a metallic sulphuret containing lead, silver in small proportions, antimony, iron, and red silver (sulphuret of antimony and silver). These mines are said now to yield 195,000 pounds of lead, and 1000 pounds of silver annually.*

Passing over, in our progress southward, the district of Kharput, where there is a large plain extending south by west, we arrive at the copper mines of Arghana. The mountains which surround them have an elevation of from 4000 to 4500 feet; and Magharat, "the hill of caves," contains the principal mine. This eminence is composed of steatite, with veins of quartz, barytes, and asbestos of various kinds, the flexible, and the non-elastic; beds of limestone, sandstone, and copper pyrites. There are upward of fourteen galleries carried into the rock, and the annual produce is said to be about 2,250,000 pounds. In this barren region are situated the water-shed of the Euphrates and the Tigris, and the primary sources of this latter stream. To the north of Arghana there is a district occupied by carbonaceous marls and sandstones; and from this locality specimens of good coal were transmitted to the Euphrates expedition by Mr. Brant, her majesty's consul at Erzeroum.† Mr. Ainsworth, in his account of this locality, re-

* Ainsworth's Researches, p. 279–281.

† See Colonel Chesney's General Statement of the Proceedings of the

marks that the sandstone contained beds which were highly carbonaceous, and others that were distinctly ferruginous. The former were converted into stone-coal, with a vitreous fracture and dark shining surface; but they were non-bituminous.* He does not appear to have discovered any useful coal. Southward of this succeeds the plateau of Diarbekir, with a mean elevation of 1900 feet, and being for the most part a uniform flat, cut up towards the east by the Tigris. The rocks of the table-land of Jezirah, at an elevation of 1540 feet, are of the same mineral character, and consist of basalts with augite, titaniferous iron, and calcareous spar.

We may here remark, that neither the geological structure nor the correct topography of the Masius chain, including the Baarem Hills and Jibel-tur, have hitherto been described in a way that is at all satisfactory.†

We now proceed to the *Second District*, which extends from the thirty-seventh degree north latitude to the thirty-fourth, and comprises laterally the basins of the two celebrated rivers, from the confines of Syria to the mountains of Kurdistan, possessing a mean breadth of about 200 miles.

The character of the plains in this district varies with their latitude and altitude; with the quality of the soil, and the quantity of moisture. From Jezirah, westward to near Nisibin, there are felspathic plutonic rocks, with a mean elevation of 1550 feet, and which form a stony wilderness with little or no cultivation, but where, nevertheless, numerous flocks of sheep and cattle obtain a scanty support during a part of the year. The great plains of Northern Mesopotamia, from Orfa to Nisibin, and thence to the plain east of Mosul, the site of ancient Nineveh, have an elevation of about 1300 feet, are nearly of a uniform level, with a soil possessing good agricultural qualities, but barren for want of irrigation. An exception in regard to this sterility invariably occurs where the plains are intersected by hills or groups of hills—an arrangement by no means infrequent. As instances, we may specify the Babel Mountains, south

Euphrates Expedition, in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. vii., p. 438.

* Researches, p. 271, 272.

† See an interesting account of a journey in this district by Mr. Brant, in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. vi., p. 208. In the accompanying map, the geographical aspect is better represented than in any other we have seen.

of Jezirah; the lower Kurdistan mountains, on the east of Mosul; the Sinjar range, bearing nearly west, and to the parallel of Nisibin; the Jibel Makhul and Jibel Hamrine, skirting the Tigris at Shirkat, stretching south and crossing it to the eastward, and extending thence far to the southeast;* and the Southern Hamrines, which continue to the Persian Gulf.† The geognostic characters of these and other hills, and of the wide plains they overlook, will be briefly noticed when the districts to which they belong come more immediately under review.

The grand peculiarity of the whole of this vast region, in a geological point of view, is the fact that the tertiary, more especially those supercretaceous deposites which include gypsum (hitherto generally supposed to be confined to basins or circumscribed localities), assume an extent of geographical development which gives to them a scientific importance equal to that belonging to any other rock formation of the crust of the earth. The gypseous deposite is, moreover, divided into two great portions, characterized by a different association of beds, and separated by a great layer of marine limestones. The whole country, in fact, consists of these calcareous deposites, here and there interrupted by plutonic rocks.

The sedimentary masses which towards the south repose upon the plutonic rocks of the Taurus, are subcrystalline limestones, which, in the immediate neighbourhood of the mountain-chain, exhibit mostly a uniform texture, either compact or granular. At Samosata, the Euphrates runs through a valley from eight to ten miles in width, consisting of planes of slightly different altitudes, left by the river as it has at successive periods deepened its course. At Roumkala, the limestone becomes somewhat granular and splintery, arranged in thin strata, the upper beds being fossiliferous, having a high angle of inclination, much curved and contorted, and dipping in various directions, but most generally to the southeast. It is through formations of this character the Euphrates forces its way from Samosata to Roumkala; and its passage through these rocky portals is accompanied with much that is picturesque in scenery, and with phenomena highly instructive in science.

* For good representations of the Sinjar and Hamrine ranges, see map accompanying Mr. Forbes's and Lieutenant Lynch's Papers in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. ix. p. 476.

† Ainsworth's Researches, p. 113.

The indurated chalk first shows itself in the neighbourhood of the plutonic masses, at a place called Jemjemé; and the various contortions and flexures in the rock, forming high cliffs near the river, are very remarkable. The whole system rises upward of 1200 feet above the bed of the stream. It consists of friable buff-coloured marls and chalks, which on the south support hard limestones, dipping at a high angle of inclination to the south. From Balkis to Bir, the river is bounded on one side by a low plain; on the other, by cliffs of white chalk, about 150 feet in height, and capped by a deposite of pebbles and soil. The town of Bir is built upon a similar chalk formation, which is now distinguishable into two portions, the lower consisting of white and pure chalk in thick beds, containing flints. The upper is separated from the lower by light-blue and argillo-calcareous beds, which are of a yellowish colour.

Instead of following the Euphrates farther in its course at present, we shall now reascend to Samosata; and, in the first place, trace the margin of the great basin eastward, and then southward as it continues along the Kurdistan range, the lofty barrier between these countries and Persia.

Proceeding then from Samosata to Orfa, we find that the country, losing its simple undulatory character, is broken up by volcanic ridges and cones; after which are deep valleys, divided by long parallel ranges of hills composed of chalk capped by basalts, until, towards the east, these last predominate, and occupy the whole surface of the upland as far as to the plains of Mesopotamia. To the south the valleys open, and here is situated Orfa; while to the east, the chalk formation becomes once more, in the hills of Nimrod, a compact limestone, at the foot of which extends the rich plain of Haran, composed of ancient alluvium. The city of Orfa is built at the point where the hilly and rocky regions, formed of masses of plutonic origin, terminate in the chalk soil. There feldspatho-igneous rocks, consisting of basalt and greenstone, form, towards the east and northeast, an extended country of barren surface with stony ravines. In the chalk plain to the north, about ten or fifteen miles from Orfa, the same formations rise in several distinct cones, attaining an altitude of from 500 to 800 feet above the surrounding country, out of which they rise in almost total isolation, both geological and geographical. Rocks of the same plutonic series again

make their appearance on approaching Seruj, and there form low ranges of undulating hills, stretching nearly north and south, and extending in a southwesterly direction almost to the banks of the Euphrates. With these exceptions, the whole of the country lying between that river and Orfa, from Samosata to the north, and Bir to the south, including the Nimrod chain of hills, is composed of the upper and lower chalk formations.

Advancing still farther east towards the Tigris, and taking Mosul as a centre, we remark that the western part of the country is occupied by rocky formations, which rise in a gently undulating territory out of the plain of Mesopotamia. The formations in the immediate vicinity of the town consist of solid beds of massive, compact, and granular calcareous gypsum, in horizontal strata, and non-fossiliferous. This is the rock that is so extensively quarried as Mosul marble, of which the colour is bluish-white, but sometimes snow-white or bluish-gray. The gypsum is not separated by fissures, like that of Paris, and is less slaty than that of Kirkook. Superimposed upon it is a thin formation of coarse, friable limestone, abounding in shells, which, in fact, is the common building-stone of the district. Above this deposite is a bed, nine inches in thickness, of non-fossiliferous argillaceous marls, highly dendritic, and resembling the *happante* of Montmartre. Over this is a coarse mass of green-coloured marls.

It is in this locality, and in a formation similar to the one just described, at the foot of the cliffs of Mar Gabriel, that several thermal springs occur, which exhale hydrosulphuric acid gas, and deposite sulphur in abundance. They are six in number, more or less copious, and the united streams form a rivulet, the colour of which is milk-white, from the quantity of precipitated sulphur. Their general temperature ranges from 77° Fahrenheit to 78°, that of the air being 57° in the shade. The one in Nineveh, designated by Mr. Rich Thisbe's Well, is commonly at the temperature of 66°. Celebrated sulphur mines occur about eight miles from Mosul; and deposites of the mineral are wrought by means of galleries formed in the face of the cliffs. The rocks consist of crag, of coarse gypsum and marls, containing a bed of granular and semi-crystalline sulphur about seven feet in thickness. This mineral is compact, fine, and granular, generally bluish-gray, with

calc spar interposed; it sometimes occurs crystallized, and of a beautiful rich olive-green colour. A sulphate of strontian is likewise here met with.

The most remarkable feature of the rocks of Kurdistan is the invariable compactness and hard texture of the limestone. But this obtains only in the mountainous districts; for, as the indurated variety of Roumkala on the Euphrates becomes a soft chalk, with many imbedded fossils, so that of the westerly range of these other mountains is found, on the plains of Mosul, soft, pliable, and stored with shells.

Leaving the Baziyan Hills behind and to the east, the country towards the west presents red and other sandstone, which dip to the south and west. The next district rises out of the sandstone country, and consists of bolder and loftier, though rounder hills of limestone conglomerate, not cemented, but loose, with the acclivities covered with green-sward. The third district exhibits to the eye of the observer red sands, reposing on sandstone, divided into separate rounded hills, or cut by the waters into a system of small valleys of the customary simple relations where their formation depends upon denudation alone. The next ridge consists of brown and bluish-coloured sandstone, sometimes micaceous, alternating with red sands, and rising in low successive ridges only a few feet above the soil; these are frequently quarried for building. The last ridge east of Kirkook is low, and consists of gypsum, calcareous gypsum, and sandstone. The second of these rocks, which was first observed in this place, becomes important in those countries from its application to architectural purposes, being almost as easily worked as gypsum, and much more durable. It is extensively used for slabs, tombstones, and similar purposes, and is usually designated, as already mentioned, Mosul marble.

The Karahjah Dag form hills of considerable elevation on the Tigris, south of the Zab; thence their course is by Altun Kupri to Kirkook, and continued to Taok. They consist throughout of Cyclade limestone, gypsum, marls, saliferous sand, and common sandstone. Two ranges of low hills run to the east of Kirkook in a northwesterly direction. The first rises scarcely 200 feet above the plain, the second about 500. The western one consists of Cyclade limestone and gypsum; the plain, of red and brown sandstone, and red saliferous sands. This is the character

of the calcareous deposite at the *Abu Gerger* of the Arabs, "the father of boiling," a place remarkable for the exhibition of flames (hence called Hill of Flames), which appear to have been in existence from the most remote period. The limestone at this place entirely supersedes the marls and gypsum, and the gases escape in a little central depression on the summit of the ridge. The spot whence the flames issue has a dull, dusky, grayish aspect in broad daylight, and they are only visible upon near approach. The evolution of sulphureous acid is so great that it soon becomes intolerable; and a thermometer held in the evolved gases rose to 220°. Wherever a spear is thrust into the ground, a new blaze bursts forth; not the pale lambent stream produced by carburetted hydrogen, nor the flickering light of hydrosulphuric acid in combustion, but a fierce and ardent fire, like that which would be produced by the mingled burning of sulphur, coal, and bitumen. Hence it would appear that these flames are not connected with the great volcanic phenomena which act, through fissures or rents, from the deep portions of the earth's crust, but belong to some peculiar and local chemical action. Appearances very similar have been noticed on the coast of the county of Kerry; at Charmouth, in Dorsetshire; and at Aubin and Dutivielle, in Prussia. The most striking feature in the present case is the great extent of the phenomenon; its exceeding duration; and that, according to report, it is continued during the driest weather.*

The chain of the Kufri Hills, which rises more than 300 feet above the plain, is composed of alternating beds of gypsum, red sandstone, and clays, the first of these being transparent and crystalline, or snow-white and fibrous. About eight miles to the northwest a fresh-water limestone makes its appearance, hard and sonorous, with vesicular and other cavities. This rock soon supersedes the gypsum. The highest range of the Hamrine Hills is the most easterly, and reaches an elevation of about 500 feet. It is capped with a deposite of pebbles, which alternates with the upper silicious beds. The second range is composed of red sandstone, with occasional thin veins of gypsum, and brown argillaceous beds. The third is gray or bluish sandstone, containing red nodules of a silico-magnesian

* Ainsworth's Researches, p. 243.

substance; and the western outliers at Delli-Abbas consist of red friable sandstone. The general direction of the chain is from southeast to northwest.

A very few remarks on that portion of the Euphrates we left undescribed, and in which we shall give a prominence to the gypseous deposites, will close our geological survey of this most important DISTRICT.

To the south of Kara Bambuch, the valley of the Euphrates begins to widen, the banks are occupied by extensive alluvial plains, while low hills of transported pebbles, with huge fragments of limestone superimposed, diversify the level. About fifteen miles from the pass, hills composed of alternating indurated and friable beds advance to the river-side from the east, where they attain an elevation of 800 feet. On the western side is an isolated eminence of similar features, and capped by a stratum of indurated chalk.

The first appearance of gypsum where the formations are on a large scale, showing a tendency to a new order of things, wherein the lime enters into different chemical relations, is of a very remarkable character. The same formation, which soon assumes a prodigious development, is here thrown into the most circumscribed limits; and, although accompanied by its usual associated marls, presents no traces of fresh-water shells, while in its subsequent expansion there is the same order of attending phenomena as are observed in other countries. To the south of Jaber, a level range of marls, capped by gypsum, occurs on the right bank, about two miles long, and 300 feet high. At the northern end the gypsum is from twenty to twenty-five feet in thickness, and reposes upon cretaceous marls 150 feet deep: the former soon attains a thickness of upward of 40 feet, till at the next southerly headland it occupies the whole depth of the cliff, forming hills about eighty feet high. On the left bank in this district, formations of a similar character recede to a greater distance from the river; and the hills, scarcely 100 feet in height, are composed towards the north of mural precipices of gypsum reposing upon yellow marls. From Beles to Racca is a distance of seventy miles, of which sixty are occupied by the same formation; and no alteration of geognostic characters is met with till the river passes through the prolongation of the Jibel Buchir at Zenobia, a farther distance, by

its banks, of ninety-one miles. At that point the hills consist of marls and gypsum, covered by an overlying formation of plutonic rocks and crystalline breccia. The gypsum at first alternates with the marls, but soon assumes a predominating development. It occurs snow-white and saccharoidal, also small-grained and granular: it is likewise met with transparent, laminar, in thin beds, and in small masses, variously arranged like brick-tiles. At Salahiyah, the formations at the base of the cliffs are constituted of the usual gypsum and marls. Of the first there are no fewer than twenty-four beds, from two to four feet thick, alternating with marls, some of which are divided by veins of laminar transparent gypsum, which may be obtained for optical purposes, and as a subtitute for glass. Superimposed upon these is a red ossiferous limestone breccia developed to the extent of many feet in thickness. It gives origin to a level and uniform plain, stony, and exceedingly destitute of vegetation, stretching to the extreme verge of the horizon. It would be difficult to imagine a more desolate scene than is here presented.

On the right bank of the river, between Anah and Hadisah, the Jibel Abu extends in uniform summits above cultivated plains; and the country farther west is occupied by the low hills usually called the Jibel-Til Antah, followed by the Jibel Kaifel Rusajah, and the Jibel Bajan. To the east, the hills of Rechanah are succeeded by an interval of low and fertile land to the districts of the Lagadahr Hills and the Moherah. These are not groups of hills with distinct acclivities and great intervening longitudinal valleys, but almost always fragments of the high country in the interior, cut off by the action of ordinary or extraordinary powers of denudation into distinct ranges. Often, as in the Moherah Hills, a great number of circumscribed valleys, like indentures in the uplands, become so complex in their relations as in fact to constitute hilly groups; in others, such as the Lagadahr, a long range is sent off to the southwest, while another branch goes to the southeast under a different name, leaving a great plain, deeply intersected by tributary rivulets to the south, in the angle between the two. In a geological point of view, they are in all cases hills and valleys of denudation, and in no instance mountains of elevation or valleys of subsidence. The constant order of the succession of strata is sandstone and

ironstone, breccia and gravel, green and red marls, yellow marls, bituminous or black coarse marls, rude bituminous rock, limestone, and saliferous clays. On reaching Hit, in descending the stream, everything characteristic of solidity and durability has disappeared. The plains are wide, the hills low, and the rock formations coarse, non-crystalline, and friable. To the east the Meridj-Suab ridges exhibit nothing but the straw-yellow limestones, and they are succeeded by mounds of sand; and a little beyond, sections appear which furnish green marls, gypsum, hard marls, and gypsum again in beds a few feet thick. Gravel and mud repose on these deposites.

From these few hints it will appear, that the principal object of contemplation in the structure and development of the rocks in the basin of the Euphrates is the great extent of the tertiary, more accurately the cretaceous and supercretaceous deposites. They occupy a space in a straight line of six degrees and a half of latitude, and among them the chalky and gypseous beds assume by far the most extensive development. The intercalation, at the limits of the chalk formations, of marls and gypsums unprovided with lacustrine shells in the cretaceous layers, is another very striking fact; for in this case the intervening clays and limestone appear to be totally wanting, and gypseous deposites to have taken their place. The most remarkable peculiarity in the inferior gypsum is the eruption of plutonic masses, which phenomenon has evidently occurred at a period posterior to the elevation of the Taurian chain, as the formations now described are superimposed upon the last deposite by transport, which contains pebbles from those regions.

A short notice of the celebrated Naphtha Springs in this district must not be omitted. First of all, it is worthy of remark, that whether at the eastern or western side of the great basin, they occupy very much the same geological position, and are found at the extreme limits of the lateral series of rock formation, and just at the point where these come in contact with the oldest alluvial deposites Thus is it at Hit, on the banks of the Euphrates, in reference to the lateral formation of the Taurus, and so also to the east, near the Tigris, in regard to the lateral ranges of the Kurdistan Mountains. Two localities have been pre-eminently signalized; the one situated at Hit, the ancient Is,

celebrated from all antiquity for its never-failing fountains of bitumen, which furnished the imperishable mortar of the Babylonian structure. We know it was visited by Alexander, Trajan, and Julian; and now it is used only for daubing gopher-boats on the Euphrates. In this locality there are several fountains, and at some distance from each other. Round a few of them the soil is converted into rude salt-pans or reservoirs, from which the water evaporates, and whence, by means of this simple process, immense quantities of fine salt are obtained. The temperature of one spring was at 88°, of another at 98°. The taste is bitter-sweet; the water is clear and transparent; the odour ammoniacal and sulphureous. They evolve gases in abundance, and produce bitumen, according to the estimation of the natives, at the rate of many gallons an hour. The springs appear in argillaceous limestones, containing magnesia, and imbibing moisture with facility. Upon this formation a gypseous deposite is superimposed throughout the surrounding country, but not in the immediate vicinity of the fountains.

If, on the east of the Tigris, the naphtha springs are not so productive as those above alluded to, they seem to be decidedly more numerous. In Mr. Rich's interesting work, allusion is made to several. Thus he informs us that the naphtha pit, which is in the pass of the hills at Tooz Khoormattee, is about fifteen feet deep, and to the height of ten filled with water, on the surface of which the black substance floats. This is skimmed off, and the water conveyed into reservoirs, where it crystallizes, becoming excellent salt of a fine white brilliant grain, without bitterness: it is worth about 20,000 piastres annually. The daily produce of the mineral oil is about thirty pints. He adds, that the principal springs are in the hills towards Kufri; that they are five or six in number, and are much more productive; but that no salt is found there. Indeed, it is probable that naphtha may be found in almost any part of this chain.* In Mr. Ainsworth's volume we find it moreover stated, that not far from Abu Gerger are several wells from which petroleum is obtained in large quantities: the number of springs is continually varying; for, dig where you will, the mineral oozes out over an area of about 300 square yards.†

* Rich's Narrative, vol. i., p. 28, 29.
† Ainsworth's Researches, p. 244.

In directing attention to the third great *District* of this country, namely, the alluvial, which will occupy a much smaller portion of our limits than the one we have just left, it is impossible not to be struck with the mighty results produced in the course of ages by the silent but powerful agency of the flow of waters. Mr. Lyell expresses only the general sentiment of geologists when he remarks, "that the union of the Tigris and the Euphrates must undoubtedly have been one of the modern geographical changes on our earth;"* and now, from Korna, the place of junction, to the Persian Gulf, there is a breadth of land of not less than sixty or seventy miles. These deposites constitute a plain extending to about 32,400 geographical square miles; and the rivers which have produced them, in addition to the two already so often named, are the Kerkha from Kurdistan, and the Karoon from Kuzistan.

At Mesjid Sandebeyah, these alluvia are circumscribed on the north by low hills and undulating land of the tertiary rock formation, which, rising near Babylon, cross the Euphrates about eight miles above Felugia, and towards the Tigris are lost in the plains traversed by the Median wall. To the west they are limited by the line of rock and sand which stretches beyond the Roomyah a little to the west of the Samosata branch of the Euphrates, and to the east by the Hamrine Hills. At its northern limit, the plain has a slight but well-defined inclination towards the south; and after undulating in the central districts, it falls into mere marshes and lakes. In the northern parts, the soil is pebbly, consisting almost solely of variously coloured flints and small fragments of gypsum: this is succeeded by a continuous formation of a clayey nature, in part humus and in part argillo-calcareous, but covered, generally speaking, with mould, dust, or sand.

In various localities throughout this district, and more especially round the site of ancient Babylon, a curious phenomenon presents itself, which consists in a number of sandhills on the level plain, that are constantly shifting their place and varying in amount, and yet always remain in the same general locality. They appear to owe their existence to the presence of springs, which moisten the sand and cause its accumulation; while the prevailing

* Principles of Geology, 5th edit., vol. i., p. 374.

winds alter their form without affecting their position. They are objects of superstition to the Arabs.

Efflorescences, both of common salt and saltpetre, are abundant in these plains; and it is of importance to distinguish them, as the one is probably derived from the decomposition of vegetable matter, characteristic of good vegetable mould, or of alluvium originating in rivers or lakes; while the other is no less strongly indicative of deposition from the sea, except when there are local formations of rock-salt.

The soil of the marshes of Lemlum consists for the most part of a soft alluvial clay and mud, containing only fresh-water shells. The greater part of the basin, however, is occupied by aquatic plants; and the whole comprehends a district of nearly forty square miles. The extensive plains of Chaldea, eastward, are upon a somewhat higher level, and present a territory which is the seat of cultivation during the dry months. The soil here is a strong tenacious clay, of a deep blue colour, argillo-calcareous, and very uniform in its character; it abounds in shells which belong to a very few genera, and these almost entirely marine.

To the south of the point of union between the Euphrates and Tigris the surface is perpetually occupied by water, and covered with a corresponding vegetation, deriving its character from a species of bent-grass, *Agrostis*, which has very much the appearance of the true reed, *Arundo*, of northern Europe. These tracts exhibit great uniformity of feature, together with a boundless growth of plants of the same aspect, which are everywhere intersected by artificial canals, or spotted with ponds and lakes.

The district which extends from the point of junction of the rivers to the embouchure in the Persian Gulf, is characterized on the eastern bank, and as far south as the mouth of the Karoon, by a fringe of date-trees, to which, at some distance inland, succeeds a band of reeds and rush marshes, then some pasturage, and, finally, a small portion of cultivated land. Beyond this tract there is a level and uniform plain, which is sprinkled with occasional tamarisks, acacias, and saline plants one half of the year, and inundated during the other. The opposite or western bank of the stream is, for the most part, covered with date-trees; the succeeding tract of vegetation is very narrow, being often confined by ranges of sandhills to a few hundred

yards. Beyond this verdant band, an inundation, lasting six or eight months, veils the earth from sight; and, during the remainder of the year, nothing is seen but a level barren plain, without either moss or lichen to feed the piping sand-grouse.

The region still farther to the south, or the Junub, presents similar characters, exhibiting, for the most part, a belt of date-trees, surrounded with inundation at one season of the year, and a naked plain during the remainder. This district contains many villages, and canals which intersect it. That of Ashar flows past the fort of Nimiah to the city of Bussora, and twice a day, with the flowing tide, waters the gardens of that unhealthy spot. The extensive level from the Junub to the confluence of the river with the sea, forms the Danasir, or water country of Niebuhr, and the Choabedeh of Sir William Jones. In the interior there is the same barren succession of mud and sands, bounded by the pebbly deposites of the Pallacopas, and subjected to inundations during nine months of the year. The margin of the river, which on either side is lined with woods of the graceful date, affords at times rich pasturage for buffaloes. Even here the villages are numerous, but small; and the population, upon the whole, is scanty.

BOTANY.

In a region so elevated and varied as the first or mountain district of the countries we are now considering, of which the soil is very diversified, and where the climate is remarkable for cold winters and hot summers, it may naturally be expected that the vegetation should exhibit striking varieties of feature and form. This is well illustrated in the interesting Journey of Mr. Brant, already referred to, where, respecting the neighbourhood of Kebban-Madan, he remarks, "The mountains round exhibit barrenness under its most forbidding aspects; for they produce neither tree, nor shrub, nor vegetation of any kind." And again, of the environs of Kharput, about thirty miles distant, he says, "The plain furnishes a vast quantity of grain, and wheat returns from twelve to sixteen fold; the productions of the soil are various, consisting of every kind of grain, grapes, wine of a superior quality, oil from seeds, and cotton."*

* Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. vi., p. 206, 207.

Mr. Ainsworth, whom we are happy again to acknowledge as our principal guide, informs us that the most remarkable feature in the vegetation of Taurus is the abundance of trees, shrubs, and plants in the northern, and their comparative absence in the southern district. With the intention of presenting a summary of whatever information has been collected, we shall here endeavour to introduce, somewhat condensed, and sometimes in a tabular form, all the details supplied by this intelligent traveller.

The forest-trees are for the most part the following:

Pinus Pinea.....	Stone pine.	Corylus colurna.	Constantinople nut-tree.
Pinus halepensis*	Aleppo pine.	Cicer monspessulanum.....	Montpelier chick-pea.
Quercus cerris...	Turkey oak.	Quercus Ilex....	Evergreen oak.
Quercus pedunculata..	Constantinople oak.	Quercus Ægilops	Velonia oak.
Quercus sessiliflora	Sessiliflore oak.	Quercus coccifera	Kermes oak.
Castanea vesca..	Common chestnut	Quercus Suber..	Cork-tree.
Ornus Europæa..	European flowering-ash.	Querc. infectoria.	Dyeing oak.
Ornus rotundifolia	Manna flowering-ash.	Acer pseudo-platanus.....	Sycamore.
Alnus cordifolia..	Heart-leaved alder.	Fraxinus parvifolia.....	Small-leaved ash.
		Frax. lentiscifolia	Aleppo ash.

On the flanks of forests, or isolated, there appear,

Ceratonia siliqua.....	Carob-tree, or St. John's bread.	Mespilus Pyracantha	Pyracanth medlar
Cercis siliquastrum	European Judas-tree.	Prunus Laurocerasus.....	Common laurel

By the banks of streams are found,

Tamarix Gallica	French tamarisk.	Platanus Orientalis.....	Oriental plane-tree.
Nerium oleander	Common oleander.	Alnus cordifolia	Heart-leaved alder.

And in shrubberies and low woodland,

Cupressus sempervirens	Common cypress.	Pistachia terebinthus	Turpentine-tree.
Juniperus Phœnicia.....	Phœnician juniper.	Spartium scoparia	Common broom
Juniperus macrocarpa	Large-fruited juniper.	Genista tinctoria.	Green-weed genista.
Myrtus communis	Common mrytle.	Viburnum minus.	Lesser viburnum.
		Arbutus Unedo..	Common arbutus.

* This and various other lists in the work from which we quote, occasionally bear the marks of the want of that laborious revision which the author's circumstances altogether prevented him from bestowing. Wherever these inadvertences affect the sense or obscure the reasoning, we take the liberty to correct them.

Ilex aquifolium	Common holly.	Clematis Orientalis	Oriental clematis.
Ostrya vulgaris	Common hop hornbeam.	Cistus incanus	Hoary rock-rose.
Daphne Pontica	Pontic Daphne.	Jasminum fruticans	Common yellow jasmine.
Daphne sericea	Silky Daphne.	Caprifolium Periclymenium	Woodbine.
Buxus sempervirens	Common box-tree.	Rhamnus Alaternus	Broad-leaved buckthorn.
Eleagnus spinosa	Prickly-leaved oleaster.	Rhamnus Paliurus	Paliurus buckthorn.
Bryonia Cretica	Cretan bryony.	Poterium spinosum	Prickly shrubby Burnet.
Dianthus arboreus	Tree pink.		
Clematis Vitalba	Travellers' joy.		

The broad and the narrow leaved *Phillyreæ* show themselves only on the northern side of the Taurus; and the common and large Rhododendrons first appear beyond the Chamlu Bel. Heaths are rare; the tree-heath, *Erica arborea*, flourishes near Sis.

Among the useful and cultivated plants of Taurus may be noted the vine, the fig-tree, almond-tree, the olive, wheat, spelt-wheat (*Triticum Spelta*), winter barley (*Hordeum hexastichon*), and common barley. Gallnuts are gathered chiefly from the Dyer's, Velonia, and Kermes oaks. There are also pears, apples, and apricots in abundance. The roots of the great yellow milk-vetch (*Astragalus Christianus*) and Eastern sea-kale (*Crambe Orientalis*) are sought as articles of food. Sumach (*Rhus Cotinus*) is used for tanning skins red, and buckthorn (*Rhamnus catharticus*), as well as jointed Valantia (*V. articulata*), for giving them a yellow hue. We may here add, from Mr. Rich's valuable Narrative, that in Kurdistan, gallnuts are produced in great plenty, especially in the dwarf-oak (*Quercus nana*) forest of Kara Dag; and "the plant which produces gum-arabic grows wild in the mountains; it has a purple flower, and is called ghewun." We should at once have referred this statement to the *Acacia Arabica*, the gum-arabic tree, whose habitat is said to be the East Indies, had not the author remarked that the flower is purple, while that of the other is white.

"Manna," continues Mr. Rich, "called in Turkish the divine sweetmeat, in Kurdish ghezo, is found on the dwarf-oak, though several other plants are said to produce it, but not so abundantly or in such good quality. It is collected by gathering the leaves of the tree, which, after being allowed time to dry, are gently thrashed on a cloth. The

commodity is thus brought to market in lumps, mixed with fragments of leaves, from which it is afterward cleared by boiling. There is another kind of manna, found on rocks and stones, which is quite pure, of a white colour, and much more esteemed than the tree-manna."* On this interesting paragraph we willingly remark, that Mr. Rich's observation as to manna being produced by other plants is quite correct. Mr. Russel, in his Natural History of Aleppo, states that it is found on the *Hedysarum Alhagi*, in Mesopotamia and other Eastern countries. The shrub, he adds, grows plentifully; and the manna is gathered chiefly about Taurus. Tournefort found it in Armenia, and made a distinct genus for it under the name of Alhagi.† The other statement, however, that the "divine sweetmeat" grows on the *Quercus nana*, an assertion we have nowhere else met with, requires confirmation. As is generally known, it is the Ornus rotundifolia (*Fraxinus ornus*, Linn.) which supplies most of the manna of commerce. The *Fraxinus virgata* also yields some, but from no other species of ornus can it be procured.‡ There is a dwarf-ash (*F. anna*) as well as a dwarf-oak (*Q. nana*). May not this have led to some mistake?

Though the physical characters of the second great district, to which we now proceed, are of course infinitely less diversified than those of the entire region which falls under our review, yet still it should be noted that the varieties it presents are both numerous and conspicuous. They are produced chiefly by the differences of altitude and latitude, by the quality of the soil, and the presence or absence of moisture; this last being, perhaps, the most effective cause. If any of the great plains are intersected by hills, and still more if, in addition, the district is well watered by means of rivers or springs, by natural inundations, or artificial irrigation, there the richest fertility and luxuriance prevail; and without these advantages, the vast expanse is commonly bare and unproductive, oftentimes tame, dreary, and desolate. The absence of forests in these regions is a phenomenon somewhat extraordinary, and not easy to be accounted for. Accordingly, on the great plain there are only succulent and herbaceous biennials, and a comparatively

* Rich's Narrative, vol. i., p. 142, 143.
† Loudon's Encyclopædia of Plants, p. 631.
‡ Ibid., p. 27.

ephemeral vegetation. It is not, however, less true, that there are numerous districts of great beauty. Such in Mesopotamia are the valleys of Orfa and Harran, so interesting as connected with the history of the patriarch Abraham; and those in Assyria are in no respect inferior. That this remark holds good even in modern times, notwithstanding the misrule and neglect to which the country has been subjected, may be demonstrated by a few short sentences. "The character of the desert," says Mr. Forbes, "improves gradually towards Mardin; and that portion of the great plain of Mesopotamia which lies in the direction of Koach Hassar, equals, if it does not surpass in fertility, the richest soils in the world."* "At length," remarks Mr. Rich, "we reached the beautiful village of Deira, imbosomed in a wood of the finest walnut-trees I ever saw. Gardens, vineyards, and cultivation surrounded the village in every available spot on the sides of the mountains. The vines in many places crept up the trees, and extended from one to another, forming festoons and drapery. Multitudes of springs burst from the sides of the hills, and dashed over the roots of the trees in innumerable little cascades. Nothing was heard but the murmuring of waters; and it was not easy to pass so beautiful a spot without a pause to enjoy its loveliness."† And once more: Lieutenant Lynch, in the year 1839, writes, "The upper plain or country near and above the Hamrine may be called a prairie, high and undulating, with the range of the Karachok Hills rising east of it, far from the Tigris, and cleft in the centre by the Zab. I am told the climate is delicious except in the heats of summer, which are healthy; and when I have been strolling along the banks of the river, it has been a luxury to breathe."‡

From Mr. Ainsworth we learn respecting Assyria generally, that during two months of the year, namely, October and November, vegetation entirely ceases; everything is burned up, and no new forms appear; but after this period, the clouds from the Lebanon in Syria, and a softening in the mountain temperature to the north and east over

* Visit to the Sinjar Hills in 1838. Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. ix., p. 422.

† Rich's Narrative, vol. i., p. 261.

‡ On the River Tigris, in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. ix., p. 442.

Mesopotamia, bring down moderate, refreshing rains. The brown and fallow colour of the soil now changes; grasses begin to spread and increase; and, notwithstanding the subsequent frost and storm, some of the composite order of plants bud, though they do not flower. Meantime, the succession of vegetation is kept up by those families which have succulent roots or bulbs, and which preserve moisture so as to ensure life in the most barren land. Sleeping during the summer heats, they awake to activity with the first rains; and some send forth prematurely their buds, or even leaves, in October. Among these are a *Colchicum*, a tulip, a crocus, an *Ixia*, and an *Arum*. They are soon, however, enveloped in snow or blasted by the wintry winds, till, in early spring, the same precocious plants reappear, with all the vivid beauty of colour and variety of forms, which have lent to the poet and the painter their not always fabulous pictures of the East.*

The species which constitute the flora of spring belong mostly to the families of *Amaryllidæ*, the lovely group which have excited admiration from the days of Solomon to the present time, *Asphodeleæ*, *Liliaceæ*, *Melanthaceæ*, and one of that most singular variety of flower, the *Orchideæ*. The plants of summer are particularly distinguished as belonging to the woolly, thorny, prickly, and hairy species; among which the *Compositæ* are most numerous in individuals and species. The most frequent genera are *Cnicus* (horse-thistles), *Carduus* (thistles), *Centaurea* (centaories), and *Calcitrapa*. *Papilionaceæ* are also common, although their small forms render them less striking; the *Labiatæ* furnish the true aromatic plants of the plain; the most numerous species belong to the genera *Stachys* (hedgenettle), *Thymus* (thyme), *Sideritis* (ironwort), *Satureja* (savory), and *Origanum* (marjory). A Pyrus grows in fallow, also one species of willow, and one of bramble: elm-leaved sumach (*Rhus Coriaria*) flourishes on the banks of the Euphrates.

The most *common plants* on cultivated lands are the prickly-headed liquorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra* and *echinata*), also *Mimosa agrestis*, and *Euphorbia Pyrrhus*. The Oriental plane-tree, near springs and tombs, attains an enormous size. One at Bir is said to have measured thirty-six feet in circumference.

* Ainsworth's Researches, p. 33.

The *useful plants* which occur in this zone, either cultivated or not, are still very numerous. Among the grains are wheat, barley, lentils (*Ervum Lens*), common chick-pea (*Cicer arietinum*), the garden-bean, chickling vetch (*Lathyrus sativus*), red flowered vetch (*Vicia Nissoliana*), the kidney bean, millet (*Holcus Sorghum*), and Lucerne. The Arabs eat the *Holcus bicolor*.

The quantity of *Potherbs* now cultivated, where European plants have been introduced, is considerable, though more or less characteristic. Of these may be named the cucumber, melon, the egg-plant (*Solanum Melongena*), the eatable *Hibiscus*, and various kinds of gourds. Among the *fruits* are the olives, the pistachia-tree (*P. officinalis*), the white and common mulberry, the common fig, cherry, apricot, peach, and three varieties of plums; also the apple, pear, quince, dogwood (*Cornus mas*), sweet almond, walnut, hazel, lotus-tree, beech, chestnut, Siberian pine, nuts, and such like. Among *cultivated plants* there is tobacco, oil-grain (*Sesamum Orientale*), castor-oil, hemp, common fenn-greek (*Trigonella Fœnum Græcum*), the carthamus (*C. tinctorius*), and cotton. Among the *useful vegetables* furnished by the fields, are the

Capparis spinosa	Common caper-tree.	Satureja hortensis	Summer savory.
Borago officinalis	Common borage.	Sinapis Orientalis	Oriental mustard.
Malva rotundifolia	Mallows.	Tordylium Syriacum	Syrian hartwort.
Rumex acetosa	Common sorrel.	Glycyrrhiza glabra	Common liquorice.
S. Nasturtium	Sisymbrium.	A. officinalis	Common asparagus.
Lycoperdon tuberosum	Tuberose puff-ball.		

The leaves of the Egyptian Arum (*A. Colocasia*) are used as paper on the Chaldean plain: east of Mosul, a species of viper's-grass (*Scorzonera*) abounds, and affords a plentiful nutriment. Gum tragacanth is obtained from several species of *Astragalus;* in Persia, according to Olivier, from *A. verus;* but at Aleppo it is obtained from the great goats'-horn species (*A. tragacantha*), the fox-tail (*A. alopecuroides*), the small goats'-horn (*A. Poterium*), and apparently from other species, for twelve are met with in the neighbourhood. The Henna plant, with the pink juice of which the Egyptian women dye their nails, is obtained from the *Lawsonia inermis.* On the Euphrates the Arabs eat the leaves of several species of lettuce, thistle, and sow-thistle (*Lactuca,*

Carduus, *Sonchus*), and the roots of the common onion, a squill, an *Ixia;* also the bulb of a crocus, which is as sweet as an almond. The men of the Euphrates Expedition often used a species of wild Atriplex (*A. orache*) as a culinary vegetable, which eats like spinach.*

The following information is supplied from observations made during their descent on that river.

The most remarkable feature observed in the passage downward was the absence of all perennial shrubs on the hills; the chalk cliffs being covered with different species of mustard and cabbage. On the eastern bank of the river the vegetation was found to be generally a few days in advance of that on the western. The hills of the Kara Bambuch furnished a species of almond, and on the highest part a kind of cherry; also an astragalus and the field mimosa. The meadows afforded grasses, ranunculi, chamomiles, chrysanthemums, hedge-mustard, and similar plants Truffles were dug up at the foot of hills. On the plains of Balis, the circumscription of a peculair vegetation to different spots was striking; some tracts were covered with scurvy-grass, others with chamomile, some with pansies, and others with sweet-scented vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*). Twenty-three new plants, first met at Balis, continued to prevail 140 miles down the river. The tamarisk first appeared at that place; and the jungle to the south of the same station consisted of a species of poplar, with lanceolate leaves, which has been mistaken for the willow. A *Lygeum* and a bramble, a *Clematis* and two *Asparaginæ*, with the tamarisk, were the only other varieties. South of Racca, in the forest of Aran, the mulberry first presents itself. At Zenobia, *Umbelliferæ* begin to predominate. Anah is the most southern point of olive-trees, and the most northern of the date, with the exception of isolated trees, which are met with in the sheltered bay of Iskenderiah. The desert of Xenophon, extending from the Khabour to Rehoboth, is still what it was in the Greek general's day, "full of wormwood; and if any other plants grow there, they have, for the most part, an aromatic smell."†

Advancing now to the alluvial district, it is to be observed that the woolly and spiny plants of the lowlands

* Ainsworth's Researches. p. 32-36. † Ibid., p. 47-49.

and rocky tracts of Mesopotamia are here completely superseded by the succulent species. The genera *Salicornia*, Crassula, also Glassworts, Saltworts (*Salsola*), and Tragia, with certain Fig-marigolds (*Mesembryanthema*) and Asters, with their representatives, cover the plains of Babylonia and Chaldea, and spread themselves wherever the alluvial soil is impregnated, as it so frequently is, with nitre or marine salt. Among the marshes of Lemlum, the preponderance of sedges, cats'-tail (*Typhaceæ*), and the large grasses, announce, as in the temperate zone, the aquatic character of the country, and a comparatively cold and humid climate. The shallow sheets of water, which are dispersed amid this marsh of reeds and rushes, like the *meres* of England, are generally invaded by a host of water-plants (*Alismaceæ*), water-lilies, and ranunculaceæ; and in the dry parts of Chaldea the vegetation is characterized by the usual saline plants, the river-banks being fringed by shrubberies of tamarisk and acacia, and occasional groves of poplar. The weeping-willow (*Salix Babylonica*) is not met with in Babylonia. The common tamarisk of the country is the *Tamarix Orientalis* of Forskal. The solitary tree "of a species altogether strange to this country," according to Heeren, and which Rich calls *Lignum Vitæ*, growing upon the ruins of Kasr at Babylon, and supposed to be a last remnant of the hanging gardens, that appeared to Quintus Curtius like a forest, is also a tamarisk. Others exactly resembling it are frequently found overshadowing the wells of Farsistan, and are common in the country of the queen for whose solace those gardens are said to have been erected.

Finally, the vegetation at the extreme limits of the alluvial soil is not a little singular, and has been well described by Mr. Ainsworth. At the points, he remarks, where land is first gained from water, the soil is clothed with a uniform vegetation. A solitary plant, everywhere propagated over those great tracts, acts as umpire between these two elements of the terraqueous surface, and first reclaims new territories to the former. It is a species of *Mariscus*, approaching very closely to the *M. elatus* of the East Indies, of which it is, perhaps, but a variety, as it differs from it only in the marked elongation of the spikelets. This species, which has been called *elongatus*, flowers in May, at a mean temperature of 84°, but under great atmospheri-

cal vicissitudes, and a range sometimes of 24° between the temperatures of night and day. It presents a rich green carpet, and a fine verdure, in the flowering reason, relieved by the glistering aspect of the spikelets, which are nevertheless sober in their colour, as in the other species of the same family.

The roots of this plant are fibrous, and take a firm hold of the soil; by which means they give, in their propagation, solidity to whole masses of alluvium, and thus assist in repelling the invasion of the waters at spring-tides, during storms, and in periods of inundation. There is no combat here, such as when the sand-reed or sand-sedge, in other somewhat similar localities, endeavours to climb above the perpetually accumulating sands; for where the mariscus has once spread itself, the land may be said to be assuredly gained. The importance of this plant in physical geography will from this circumstance be at once perceived in all its magnitude.

ZOOLOGY.

If, in the foregoing departments of natural history, we have had occasion to lament the paucity of the materials which have hitherto been collected, with still more truth may such deficiency be regretted in respect to the science of Zoology. In fact, we can furnish only a few hints; and these we supply chiefly from an anxious wish that this chapter may be as complete as the means of information will permit. The zoology of the different districts or zones, as they have been called, of the country, must be very dissimilar; and, when reviewing the several genera and species, we shall endeavour to avoid associating groups which from this cause are naturally separated.

Mammalia.—Turning first to the high or mountain district, it would appear, as it respects the *Plantigrade Carnivora*, that bears are not uncommon in the Taurus and Kurdistan ranges. There is a black one called *mangamar;* another species is designated *gamesh;* and a brown variety is also found in the hills above Mosul. There is here also an animal belonging to the genus Glutton (*Gulo*), and another to the Ratel of Sparrman—the Cape glutton, whose specific characters have not been ascertained. Of the *Digitigrada*, a *Pine marten*, and several species of *Mustela* (weasels), also undescribed, have been observed;

as also a sable (*Martes Zibellina*, Linn.) and a genet (*Viverra genetta*, Linn.). Mr. Ainsworth states that the panther (*Felis pardus*) is said to inhabit Taurus; and the *F. Pardina* of Oken and Temminck, the *Loup cervier* of Perault, abounds in Amanus. On one occasion, a hunting-party of the Euphrates Expedition encountered eight of these animals. The black-eared lynx also frequents this district; the wolf is common in the heights both of Taurus and Kurdistan, as also the common fox. The Spermophilus citillus (*Mus citillus*, β., Pall.), the Alpine Marmot (*Arctomys marmotta*), the German Marmot of Penn (*Cricetis vulgaris*), and the great and common dormice, are tenants of the mountain forests. Of the *Cervidæ*, the fallow deer (*Cervus dama*) is common in some parts of Taurus; and it is said that the stag (*C. elephas*), the red deer of Pennant, occurs in the same district; the roebuck, too (*C. capriolus*), is not uncommon. Of *Antelopes* there are several species; one of which, the mountain, having the back and neck of a dark brown colour, bounds with amazing agility. The goat of those hills is usually designated the *Angora goat*, as we learn from Mr. Ainsworth;* and yet, upon a later testimony of the same traveller, it would appear, erroneously, for in a communication transmitted by this gentleman, in the year 1838, from the town of Angora, he remarks: The length and softness of Angora goats' hair are evidently to be attributed to an extreme climate. Cold winters (in December, 1838, the snow was upward of a foot in depth, and the minimum temperature was 3° Fahrenheit) have everywhere the effect of lengthening the hair or fleeces of animals, or of supplying them with an under-down, while the hot summers give to the hair its silky lustre and softness. He adds, the circumscribed limits generally assigned to the country of this breed of goats are, as far as we have yet seen, correct; they are not met with to the east of Kizil Irmak.† This limitation removes the true Angora goat probably from the entire district of the Taurus, and far, certainly, from the great ridges near the Euphrates. These views have recently been abundantly confirmed by Lieutenant Conolly,‡ who, moreover, states that there is a second race of goats,

* Researches, p. 41.
† Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. ix., p. 275.
‡ Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society for May, 1840, No. vi., p. 159.

with an unchanging outer covering of long bristles, between the roots of which there comes in winter an under-coat of downy wool, which is naturally thrown off in spring. This double-coated race is coloured black, brown, golden, and light-dun, gray and piebald. The colours of the two coats do not necessarily correspond, though black bristles commonly overlie brown wool. This variety exists in high perfection in the district of the true Angora goat, but has also a wider range, and prevails in Armenia and Kurdistan. The goat of Taurus is described as generally white, with buff-coloured ears and yellow horns; the hair fine and curled. The Kurdistan one has long black hair, curled and silky; horns bent downward; pendulous black ears tipped with brown, which is sometimes the colour of the legs. Among the wild species there is the *Capra ibex*, and, it is believed, the *C. Caucasicus*.

In the second district—that of the plains—Mr. Ainsworth says that the monkey is unknown, as also throughout the whole of Assyria and Babylonia. The bat tribe, however, is numerous; the genera *Rhinolophus* and *Nycteris* having their representatives. Among the insectivora were found the long-eared hedgehog, *Erinaceum auritis* of Pallas, and the Persian shrew of Pennant (*Sorex pusillus*). The *carnivora* may be said, on some accounts, to form the most important family in those countries. The lion is met with in the lower parts of the Euphrates and Tigris, and was seen as far north as Balis. A specimen from the banks of the Tigris had not the fur of the Isabella yellow colour attributed to the Arabian and Persian species, but was as brown as that of Bombay. A nameless variety of the hunting tiger, and distinguished by some naturalists from the *Felis Jubata* by the title of *F. Venatica*, is not uncommon in the lower districts of the country. An individual, exhibiting all the docility of the Persian youze, also existed at Bagdad; and, notwithstanding the want of the retractile claws, climbed trees with facility. But the most common of the cat tribe is the *F. Chaus* of Güldenstedt, and described by Russel: this animal was often met with in hunting. The lynx inhabits the woody districts; the striped hyena is very common over all the country, usually sheltering itself behind walls and shrubs: a white variety was also seen. The wolf of the Taurus is replaced in the plains by the Tartarean, and even this quadruped

is very rare in the south. The black wolf (*C. lycaon*) was seen on the banks of the Sajur; while the jackal (*C. aureus*) appears to present some differences in Syria, on the Euphrates, and in Persia. The most frequent species of fox is the *C. Corsac*.* Domestic cats are of three kinds: the common, a mixed breed, and the Persian. The domestic dogs are the Basaar, the Turkoman, with long ears and long soft hair, and also the shepherd's dog: there are also crosses of the dog and wolf, and of the dog and fox. Concerning the Turkoman watchdog, Colonel Hamilton Smith remarks, that it is a large, rugged, and fierce race, equalling the wolf in stature, shaped like an Irish greyhound, and having equally powerful jaws; that it is found wherever the Turkomans reside, and is employed to guard their tents and cattle. We believe it is in similar use among the Kurds.† An otter (*Lutra vulgaris?*) occurs on the Euphrates, Tigris, and Karoon; and the common beaver has been observed in the Euphrates and Khabour. Different gerboas inhabit the plains, of which the most usual are the *Dipus gerboa*, *D. Jaculus*, *D. Sagitta*, and *D. Pygmæus*, besides other undetermined species. The forest of Aran furnished a new species of *Gerbillus*, differing from the *G. Tamaricinus* of Pallas, which it otherwise most approached, being, including its tail, seventeen inches in length, while Pallas's quadruped is only six. The ordinary rat of the country appears to be the *Mus decumanus*. Mice are numerous and various, and the specimen seen at Bir belonged to an undescribed species. Squirrels are abundant in the woods; the species being undetermined. Porcupines are also very frequent. Of hares there are two kinds: the Turkoman variety, which haunts the plains, and that of the desert, with long hair and ears. Rabbits are infrequent.

The order of *Pachydermata* is represented by the wild boar, common in every spot at all adapted for its existence, and by the wild horse of Mesopotamia (*Equus hemionus*), although this fact has not been quite satisfactorily ascertained. The chief domesticated horses are of two breeds: the Arab, finely limbed, slender, hardy, and fleet, and the Turkoman, of a larger size and stronger make.

* *Corsac dogfox.* Colonel Hamilton Smith, in Jardine's Naturalists' Library, Mammalia, vol. ix., p. 223.

† Ibid., vol. x., p. 150.

The asses are of a common breed, but larger than in Britain: there is also an improved variety, tall, delicately limbed, swift, and easy in pace; and, lastly, the Damascus ass, with very long body, pendulous ears, smooth skin, and dark colour.

At the head of the *Ruminantia* are the camels, of which the first in point of importance and utility is the Arabian (*C. dromedarius*), with one hunch, and pale fawn-coloured brown fur; the second is the Bactrian or Persian (*C. Bactrianus*), with two hunches, and plentiful hair upon the upper part of the neck. There are two varieties of the former: first, the *dromedary*, decidedly the highest breed, of slight make, clean limbed, with small hunch; it ambles with great agility, and is used for war and expresses, as well, indeed, as for any other duty requiring haste or fatigue. Lieutenant-colonel Sheil speaks of this animal in these words: "It seems able to travel in all situations; mountains and plains, blazing sun, frost and snow, seem alike to him. These beautiful creatures are unlike the awkward, heavy camels of Persia and India; they are slender, active animals, and nearly white."* The *common* Arabian camel is of a light dun colour; it is content to browse on thistles and prickly shrubs; can bear the want of water a long time, but it seldom carries more than 250 pounds on each side. Besides these two species, there is the common Turkoman camel, which, though a mule, the produce of the Arabian and Bactrian, is found to be of great utility. It is larger, stouter, and more hairy than the others, but is not so tractable, and less capable of enduring heat than the Arab camel; its common load is about 400 pounds on each side, and some can carry a much greater weight. Of the *Cervidæ*, by far the most common in the plains is the gazelle (*A. dorcas*), a species which is often so tame as to feed freely along with the flocks of sheep. It is, consequently, highly gregarious; is very fleet, though not so active as its congeners in the mountain districts; and is of a lighter colour than most of these, though not so delicately shaped. On the Tigris, near Koote ul Amara, the *A. subgutterosa* of Güldenstedt replaces the gazelle.

* Journey through Kurdistan, in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. viii., p. 97.

The sheep are of two kinds: the common Tartarian, with an enormous tail, weighing generally fifteen or sixteen pounds, and sometimes much more; the second or the Bedouin, the tail of which is only a little larger and thicker than that of our own domestic breeds. The *Ovis Ammon* or *Argali* has been observed at Azaz. The *Bovidæ* present forms belonging to the Bubaline, the Bisontine, and the Taurine groups. The first is represented by the common buffalo (*Bos bubalus*), which is most esteemed by the Turkomans and Arabs upon the Euphrates; the second, by the zebu, with a hunch between its shoulders, also frequent on the Euphrates; and the third by the common bull and cow. Of this last there are two varieties: one of a large size, with long legs and slender body; the other smaller, with short limbs. We need scarcely remark that it is in the marshes of the lower districts of the country that the buffalo, in vast herds, loves to feed.

Ornithology.—In turning to the ornithology of these countries, upon which little precise information has been collected, we commence by remarking that the type of the northern districts is generally supposed to associate itself with that of the Taurus range, which constitutes a portion of what has been designated the Caucasian or European Zoological Province. Hence it is believed that the feathery tribes of these regions have a strong general resemblance to those of Europe, while the southern districts are considered remarkable only for possessing very few and uninteresting groups.

In the alpine country birds of prey are particularly abundant. The Egyptian neophron or vulture (*V. percnopterus*) is common in almost every town, where it lives in the shambles and burial-grounds; and a griffon (*V. fulvus*) was shot by Dr. Helfer at Bir. The sea-eagle or osprey (*Falco ossifragus* of Gmel.) is not infrequent; the kite (*F. milvus*) sweeps along the plains, and the kestril (*F. tinnunculus*) and *Falco gentilis* are brought up for the chase. Owls, too, are numerous in the Taurus, and in the chalk cliffs of the Euphrates; the species which have been observed are the great-horned or eagle owl (*Strix bubo*), the barn owl (*S. flammea*), the passerine or little owl (*S. passerina*), and the Ural owl (*S. Uralensis*). Of another common family, namely, the crows, there were noticed the raven, the carrion and hooded crow, and the

jackdaw. The jay made its appearance in the month of October; and an oriole (*O. graculus*) departed the same month. Besides these European species of well-known birds, there were others which, though peculiar, were not determined. A roller was seen, and a starling more brilliant than our own.

Of the *Insectivorous* birds there were found the song-thrush, the blackbird, and three other European species; also a rock-thrush, and the *Turdus rufus* and *roseus*, which last is the celebrated locust-bird of Pliny; also a water-ouzel and a species of shrike (*Edolius*). Few opportunities occurred to the naturalists of the Euphrates Expedition of studying the interesting groups of warblers and wag-tails. The bulbul of Syria is our nightingale, and that of Persia is a thrush. The becafico is called the fig-sparrow; the golden-crested wren is a bird of passage; the common wren and two species of stonechat were occasionally seen.

Among the *Granivorous* birds, the genus *Alauda* furnished many species, among which the skylark was most rare, and the crested lark the most common. There were also the shorelark, and the *A. calendra*, and the Tartar lark (*A. Tartarica* of Pallas). The great and the cole tit, the ortolon and yellow buntings, and four or five species of finches, were encountered, of which the goldfinch was one. It was noticed that the common sparrow, far from being stationary about towns, sometimes followed the migratory tribes in their numerous peregrinations; and in other cases, in the lower districts of the country, far away from the habitation of man, and among the jungle, they built their nests in dense congregations.

The common cuckoo was seen: the order of *Climbers* appears to be rare, even in the woods; the familiar nuthatch (*Yunx torquilla*) and two species of woodpecker constituting all that were met with. The hoopoe was observed everywhere. Among the *Alcyones*, the bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*) and the *M. cærulo cephalus* were noticed. Birds of this genus, as is well known, build in sandbanks and mounds of earth, where they are exposed to the attacks of jackals, who, after destroying their victims, appropriate their retreats. Mr. Ainsworth states that in these countries the birds were observed to prepare their excavations not only near, but actually beneath the highways; the only assignable reason for which arduous labour appeared to be

that they might thus, aided by the hardness of the trodden-down soil, frustrate the assaults of their ruthless foes. A similar consideration may influence them when they build, as they often do with great address, in vertical banks of rivers. Of the three species of kingfisher (*Alcedo*) which were seen, none was European. The *Chelidones* furnish two species of swallow and the European goatsucker; and the *Columbæ* present about fourteen species, among which are the collared turtle (*C. risora*) and the turtorella of the Italians (*C. testacco incarnata* of Forskal).

Of the *Game-birds*, one of the feather-footed genus, *Lagopus*, was shot by Colonel Chesney near Bir. Sand-grouse (*Pterocles arenarius*) occur in millions on the plains; while the European Francolin (*Perdix francolinus*) is most frequent on the Euphrates and the Tigris. In the Taurus were noticed the common and red-legged partridge, also the Greek (*P. Græca*), and the black; and in the rocks in the plains, the Barbary partridge (*P. petrosa*, Lath.). We have no means of discovering to which species Mr. Rich refers, in his interesting account of the partridge fights in Kurdistan, though probably it was the red-legged. "These little birds," he informs us, "strut about on tiptoe in defiance, jump up, bite at each other, play about to seize a favourable opening and avoid their adversary; when once fixed, he would hold like a bulldog, and sometimes lead his foe three or four times round the ring. The betting of the Kurds upon their partridge-fights and dogfights is legal, as well as on their horse-races."* Mr. Ainsworth shot that anomalous bird, the *Tetrao paradoxus* of Pallas (*Syrrhaptes Pallasii*), as far south as Koote ul Amara on the Tigris. The quail is rather rare. In the woods, the common pheasant and one other species were encountered.

The *Cursores* possess forms peculiar to the desert; and the most remarkable bird of the group, the ostrich, is now seldom seen in Western Asia. Not so, however, with the great bustard (*Otis tarda*), which is still very common: but those of Arabia and Mesopotamia are suspected to be different from such as occupy the mountains.

The order of waders (*Grallatores*) affords many species of plovers, of which are several with spines on their wings, *Tringa*, *Squatarola*, and others. Of snipes there are four

* Rich's Narrative, vol. i., p. 90–93.

species; of herons, seven; of the rail, two. *Fulica porphyris*, a species of coot, is common in the Euphrates, as is likewise *Machates pugnax*.

Of the *Palmipedes*, there occur the pelican, about ten species of the genus *Anser*, geese and ducks, including the *A. niger*, *A. clypeata*, the shoveller duck, the common wild duck (*A. boschos*), and the *A. sirsœir* of Forskal; to which may be added, the goosander (*Mergus merganser*) and the black-throated diver (*Colymbus auritus*). On the Euphrates were observed two species of gull, one of the petrels, and a cormorant.

With respect to the marshy regions of the lower district of the country, Mr. Ainsworth informs us it is a common practice, during the dry season, to fire the desiccated vegetation, when the slightest breeze spreads the flames with fearful rapidity. On these occasions, numerous birds of prey, kites, vultures, and large gray crows, are seen hovering in the air, and sweeping through the dense piles of smoke, which curl like clouds above the region of devastation, in the train of which they are ever and anon seen to alight, as an abundant destruction of animal life attends the progress of the fire. Small quadrupeds, such as gerboas and shrew-mice, hurried out of their holes, fall victims to the kites and falcons; while a rich feast of half-broiled snakes and lizards awaits the vultures and the crows.*

Reptiles.—In the class of Reptiles our notices are scanty, though the species are numerous. Two kinds of land-tortoise occur in the plains, one of which resembles the common tortoise (*Testudo Græca*); two fresh-water species (*Emys*) were found in the Euphrates, and two of the soft tortoise (*Trionyx*). There were observed among ruins three different species of gecko, and the common chameleon in woody and sheltered districts. The Saurians of the plains vary in their character according to their means of subsistence; they are chiefly *Iguanidæ*, and *Lacertinidæ* and not unfrequently *Ophidia*. Wherever rock, clay, or sand has the slightest tendency to vegetation, there insects

* Ainsworth, p. 137. A similar practice, namely, that of firing the grass and brushwood, exists in many parts of South America, and is interesting as showing the different dispositions of the Raptorial birds, which assemble on these occasions under very peculiar circumstances. A curious account of several occurrences of this kind will be found in M. Alcide D. D'Orbigny's "Voyage dans l'Amerique meridionale."

multiply, and lizards make their appearance. The fundamental forms which prevail on the plains are those with large heads and bodies, the skin being lubricated, and, by means of a secretion, well defended from the burning sun. Lizards of a long slender form and smooth do not prosper on arid and steril spots. *Agama* appear at intervals over extensive tracts of country, and furnish nourishment to various mammifera and birds. It appears that the numerous large and non-venomous serpents which frequent the plains feed upon these lizards; vipers confine themselves to the *Rodentia*. The snakes in the neighbourhood of Solymaneah are reported by Mr. Rich to be numerous, large, and also very venomous.

On the more fertile and productive banks of the Euphrates, gigantic species of *Ameiva* are common, and are met with in the adjacent plains and among ruins. A specimen captured at Balis was, including the tail, two feet six inches in length. It is still uncertain whether a crocodile frequents the Upper Euphrates. The frog-like family, *Batrachia*, which furnish many species in the rivulets of the upper districts, are unknown in the plains, and on the lower Euphrates and Tigris. An observation by Mr. Rich on an animal of this group, evidently one of the tree-frogs, is too curious to be omitted. "There is a green frog in Kurdistan which climbs trees, and catches flies and locusts like a cat, by striking out with its fore paw. I have often seen it perform this feat. It is in every respect like the common frog, but is of an apple-green colour and smooth skin. I have seen them roosting in bushes at night."*

Fishes.—Among the fish which have been observed are the Aleppo eel, described by Gronovius, and designated by Dr. Solander and Sir E. Home *Ophidium masbacambelus;* two siluri; the bearded roach (*Cobitis barbatula*); and the barbel (*Barbus vulgaris*) the most common fish of the Upper Euphrates and of the pond Djami Ibrahim, near Orfa. The chub (*Cyprinus cephalus*, Linn.) and several binnies were seen; also eels, carp, and loach. The celebrated Sharmuth or blackfish (*Siluris anguillaris* of Hasselq. and Linn.), of so much value as an article of food in Egypt and Syria, likewise occurs: it belongs to the modern genus *Macropteronotus*. Trout are common in Taurus and Kurdistan.

* Rich's Narrative, vol. i., p. 173.

The extensive mudbanks of the Shut el Arab furnish a peculiar form of that tribe of acanthi-pterygoid fish to which the labyrinth form of the gills gives the property of living out of water. In this species, increased powers of locomotion are moreover conferred by a peculiarity in the arrangement of the gill-cover, by which three of its portions are united to form an osseous plate, which is connected with the thoracic fin, and so forms a kind of fin or arm. This, it is supposed, promotes an important natural process mentioned by Mr. Ainsworth in the following terms: "The mudbanks, which are left bare by the ebbing tide, come next in succession to the sedges, and are the abode of a species of goby, which, by burrowing in the ground after their fashion, prepare it for the reception of plants, and in this manner are always performing an important part in the great effects which are ultimately produced by an all-wise Providence from apparently small causes. These fish lie in myriads upon the banks; they delight to bask in the most powerful sun of summer, and move with great agility on the approach of birds."

Insects.—Viewed in relation to its insect productions, this country has been regarded as constituting, conjointly with Persia, Cabul, and Afghanistan, a distinct entomological region. The propriety of so considering it has, however, been assumed rather from its position and geographical features than from an actual acquaintance with its insects. In fact, there are few districts in Asia respecting which we possess such scanty information in this branch of zoology. No entomologist of note, as far as we know, with the exception of Dr. Helfer, already named, has visited it since the time of Olivier, whose stay was very brief, his principal object being to investigate the natural history of Persia. There can be little doubt, however, that it approximates closely to the latter country in all its more important entomological features; and it may therefore be described generally as partaking of a European as well as an Asiatic character. In the more southern quarters, it doubtless possesses many species in common with the Mediterranean region; while its sandy tracts and alluvial deposites are likely to produce a certain proportion of those species which occur in Egypt and along the northern coasts of Africa. We know from the investigations of Forskal, and the more recent work of Hemprich and Ehrenberg, that the *Co-*

leoptera and *Lepidoptera* of the adjoining Arabian peninsula, viewed at large, differ only specifically from those of the Mediterranean region, and that the greater part are also found in Egypt, Nubia, and Abyssinia. It may, perhaps, upon the whole, be not far from the truth to affirm, that throughout the southern parts of the country, nearly the same genera prevail as in Arabia, Persia, and on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, but that the species are in most instances distinct. The northern division, however, from its comparatively elevated character, possesses a very different entomological fauna. It is nearly related to that of the Caucasus, which is remarkable for producing many fine species of *Carabidæ*, a tribe which seems to have its principal seat in the mountainous districts of Western Asia.* Not a few European and even British forms, such as *Papilio machaon*, *Parnassius Apollo*, *Pieris brassicæ*, and *Limenitis aceris*, are well known to occur in the Himalayan range; and it is very probable that they likewise exist on the Taurus and its subordinate branches, as a kind of intermediate locality.

Dr. Helfer had made a considerable collection, more particularly on the Euphrates, the publication of which was anxiously expected by entomologists.† In the mean while we present the following short summary, which appears in Mr. Ainsworth's work. The most characteristic groups during the dry months are *Truxales*, *Locustæ*, and *Acridium;* some striped *Lepidoptera*, chiefly of the genus *Maniola*, also still flutter about. Four species of *Pimelia* occur in the most arid spots, two of which are very common. After the rains, 200 *Coleoptera* were obtained, among which many genera, supposed to be exclusively proper to the temperate and northern parts of Europe, or which have only a few representatives in a southern region, occur. Such are the Brachyletrous beetles, of which forty species were found, and five of Pselaphon, the type of which is considered Swedish. Dr. Hope had questioned whether there were a true Carabus on these plains; but Dr. Helfer

* See Ménétié's Catalogue des objets d'histoire naturelle, recueillis dans un voyage fait au Caucase, &c., and the Bulletin de la Soc. des Nat. de Moscou.

† We regret to learn that this accomplished naturalist, having incautiously exposed himself on the Andaman islands, Bay of Bengal, was cut off by the savage inhabitants on the last day of January, 1840. See Asiatic Journal, vol. xxxii., May to August, 1840, p. 152.

found the *C. Hemprichii* one of the most common insects there. *Melasomæ* and *Pimeliariæ* are very numerous. The *Curculionides* furnished sixty species; *Coccinellæ* were in abundance; *Crysomelinæ*, rare; the *Lamellicornes* also furnished a bad harvest. Aphodi were particularly common, in certain seasons in flights like locusts. The prevailing types during spring are the *Heteromera*, and among these, especially, *Pimeliariæ*.*

A few cursory remarks were made by Mr. Rich in his travels through the eastern parts of the country, which may here be introduced. When describing his house at Solymaneah, he says, "In the divan khaneh (that part of the house where the master sees his visiters, and the men-servants reside) is a large hall, supported by posts, and almost dark: this is said to be a cool retreat in summer; but much annoyance arises from scorpions, which are said to be numerous, large, and venomous. *Centipedes* are also found here, but, I believe, are not much dreaded." In another place he remarks that a great quantity of honey of the finest quality is produced in Kurdistan, the bees being kept in hives of mud. Moschetoes and fleas, however, evidently attracted the largest share of this gentleman's attention. He talks of the latter as a terrible nuisance all over the East. Again, when courting repose at Solymaneah, swarms of sandflies soon demonstrated the folly of the attempt, "and our beds," he states, "were drawn into the talar; here our success was no better, and we were kept awake by these Kurdistan tormentors." In allusion to the Tigris, near Bagdad, he says, "The swarms of moschetoes are incredible; they literally filled the air, though there was a good strong breeze from the northwest, and the wind was cold. It was impossible to obtain the slightest rest for a moment."†

If we are to give credit to Keferstein, the *Cossus* of the Greeks and Romans, which was regarded as a great luxury, was the larva of a large species of weevil (*Calandra*), and was brought from Persia and Mesopotamia to supply the tables of the rich. However this may be, we know that a large species of the same genus (*C. palmarum*) is in great request in Brazil, of which country it is a native, as an article of food.

* Ainsworth's Researches, p. 47.

† Rich's Narrative, vol. i., p. 84–86, 142; vol. ii., p. 167.

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